DECLARATION AND TESTIMONY,

FOR THE

DOCTRINE AND *ORDER*

OF THE

CHURCH OF CHRIST,

AND AGAINST THE

ERRORS OF THE PRESENT TIMES.



To which is prefixed,

A

NARRATIVE,

CONCERNING THE MAINTENANCE OF THE

REFORMATION-TESTIMONY.

By the ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY of PENNSYLVANIA.

THE SECOND EDITION.

Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast. Rev. iii. 11.
Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith, without wavering. Heb. x. 28.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

I HAVE peruſed the following *Narrative*, *Declaration*, and *Teſtimony*, with great ſatisfaction; as what may be very ſerviceable to the intereſts of Truth and Reformation.

This Edition is made according to ſome manuſcript Corrections of the printing, which I got along with a printed Copy from *Philadelphia*.

Edinburgh,
Sept. 30. 1785.

ADAM GIB.

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ACT *of the* ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY, *approving the enſuing* NARRATIVE.

Philadelphia, October 25. 1784.

THE PRESBYTERY having judged it neceſſary, that a NARRATIVE concerning what the Lord has done for that part of his Church, with which they ſtand moſt immediately connected, and concerning the Teſtimony which, to this day, has been maintained in it, againſt various opinions and meaſures injurious to his cauſe, ſhould be prefixed to their DECLARATION and TESTIMONY; and a draught of this Narrative having been conſidered at ſeveral meetings, was at laſt finiſhed; and, on this and the preceding day, was read by paragraphs: The queſtion was put, *Approve of this Narrative, or not?* it was carried APPROVE: Wherefore the Preſbytery did, and hereby do, judicially APPROVE this Narrative, as what they judge neceſſary, both as a *Teſtimony* by them to the cauſe and work of God in former times, and as an ACCOUNT they are in duty bound to give the preſent and following generations, that they may *not forget the works of God.* The Preſbytery do, however, declare, that an adherence to this Narrative, as is evident from the nature of the work, can make no part of that profeſſion which will be required of church-members upon their admiſſion to communion with us.

This, by order of PRESBYTERY, is ſigned,

WILLIAM MARSHALL, *Moderator.*

Extracted by JOHN ANDERSON, *Preſb. Clk.*

NARRATIVE

CONCERNING THE MAINTENANCE OF THE REFORMATION-TESTIMONY.

CHAP. I.

Of the Warrant we have from the Word of God, and from the Practice of his People, to maintain a Direct and Public Teſtimony for the Truth.

THERE is no ſervice acceptable to God, beſide that which he hath appointed. His *word is a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path.* According to it we ſtudy to walk: by it let our faith and practice be tried. If any aſk, by what authority we prove it our duty to teſtify in the manner we do for the truth of the goſpel, and againſt the prevailing errors of our time; our anſwer is, *The Lord hath commanded us.* He who is the *Amen, the faithful and true Witneſs*, and who himſelf, *before Pontius Pilate, witneſſed a good confeſſion*, deſcribes his people, both in the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, by the name of *witneſſes*; and the deſign of this, as of every other name by which they are deſcribed in the oracles of God, is to put them in mind of their duty. Moreover, the Lord has promiſed, that *they ſhall be his witneſſes.* And this promiſe was not confined to the Apoſtles: the teſtimony of *Jeſus* was not to die with them: it was to be maintained by the ſucceeding generations of Chriſtians. *The things which thou haſt heard of me among many witneſſes*, ſaid Paul to Timothy, *the ſame commit*

thou

thou to faithful men, who ſhall be able to teach others alſo. The teſtimony of Jeſus was maintained in the loweſt ſtate of the Church, in the days of Antichriſt's reign. After the witneſſes of that period had *finiſhed their teſtimony*, or performed their appointed ſervice in the church militant, and after the enemies of Chriſt had prevailed ſo far, that they imagined their victory complete, this teſtimony was revived in the *Reformation.* Surely, it is our duty *to hold faſt what we have* thus attained, and what has been tranſmitted to us by the goodneſs of God; watching over his Church from age to age, and remembering it in its low eſtate; ſaving it from the *hand of thoſe who hated it*, and *redeeming it from the hand of the enemy.* Surely, it is our duty to follow *the footſteps* of the moſt faithful and moſt zealous ſervants of Chriſt, who have confeſſed him before men, kept the *word of his patience*, and teſtified againſt the prevailing wickedneſs of their times, at the hazard, often at the expence, of their lives. *They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their teſtimony;* and ſo muſt we, or we cannot attain, together with them, what is expreſſed in the promiſe of Chriſt: *To him that overcometh, will I give to ſit with me on my Throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſet down with my Father on his Throne.*

All true Chriſtians do, in ſome degree, maintain the teſtimony of Jeſus; but it is not uncommon to find them, through weakneſs or prejudice, neglecting ſome ſpecial part of it. Often *the fear of man*, which *bringeth a ſnare*, deters them from ſome part of their duty; while the remaining corruption of their hearts ſets them upon excuſing, yea, vindicating themſelves in this neglect. In ſuch caſes, Chriſtians are great loſers themſelves: the Lord's ſervice carries in it its own reward; and the more faithful we are in it, we will find it the more profitable to us. The intereſts of the Church ſuffer alſo: theſe truths and duties, for which no proper teſtimony is maintained, are as it were loſt.

Our Lord Jeſus hath ſaid, *Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before men, him will I confeſs alſo before my Father who is in heaven: but whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.* It is by confeſſing

confeſſing the Lord Jeſus, that we teſtify our love to him, our ſenſe of the obligations we are under to the God of all grace, our eſteem of his word, and our reſolution to hold it faſt, whatever we may ſuffer for ſo doing. It is thus, that we declare ourſelves on Chriſt's ſide, and renounce all fellowſhip with his enemies, in their devices againſt him, in their diſobedience to his laws, and in their contempt of his ſalvation. It is thus we give to God that glory due to his name, which the wicked refuſe to give. And the more open, full, and particular this confeſſion and teſtimony is, it is ſo much the more fit to anſwer the ends deſigned by it.

Such a teſtimony is neceſſary for tranſmitting the truth of the goſpel to following generations, pure, without a mixture of error, and entire, no article of it being loſt. Though no article of the truth ſhall ever be wholly loſt; though it is all preſerved in the holy ſcriptures; yet many articles of it may be forgot among a people profeſſing Chriſtianity, and ſo loſt to them. During the riſe, progreſs, and reign of Antichriſt, various important truths were ſo generally forgot, that, notwithſtanding the evidence for them in ſcripture is plain and ſtrong, many can hardly be perſuaded, that what was ſo long forgot among Chriſtians, belongs to Chriſtianity. We ought, therefore, *to give the more earneſt heed* to thoſe truths, the knowledge of which was, through the mercy of God, revived at the Reformation, *leſt*, in this *time* of prevailing apoſtaſy, *we ſhould let them ſlip. What we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us, we* ſhould *not hide* from *their children; ſhewing to the generation to come, the praiſes of the Lord, and his ſtrength, and the wonderful works that he hath done.*

Such a teſtimony is neceſſary, as a reproof to backſliding Chriſtians, who are fallen into a ſpiritual ſleep; or who, being timorous, will not, by an open confeſſion of the truth, expoſe themſelves to the reproach of gainſayers; or who, through too great love to this preſent world, do, in many inſtances, ſeek *their own*, rather than the *things of Chriſt*; or who are led ſo far aſtray, that they ſet themſelves againſt ſome part of the truth of the goſpel. Whatever may be good in ſuch, is no reaſon why we ſhould not oppoſe what is evil in them. The good principles they may retain, do not make their evil principles leſs dangerous.

rous. Their piety does not make the working of their corruption leſs hurtful. Do Chriſtians often err in their practice? So do they alſo in their principles: they are no more infallible in the one than in the other. Would it be reckoned an abſurdity to ſay, that no evil practice, of which a Chriſtian may be habitually guilty, ought to be reproved? It is not leſs an abſurdity to ſay, that no principle, into which a Chriſtian may be led, ought to be teſtified againſt.

Such a teſtimony is neceſſary, as an appointed mean to convince the wicked of their ſin, and to warn them of their danger. We are called to declare to them, in the moſt ſolemn and explicit manner, that, becauſe they hold faſt their iniquities, *God is angry with* them *every day*; and that, if they do not flee for refuge to *Jeſus, the Mediator of the new Covenant*, his anger will quickly break forth upon them. They may refuſe to hear; but, if we give them faithful warning, their blood will not be required at our hand.

A faithful teſtimony for the truth of the goſpel will always have many enemies. Backſliding profeſſors of Chriſtianity may be much enraged againſt it. Thoſe who are hardened in ſin, and who rebel againſt the light, will hate and deſpiſe it. The *teſtimony* of the witneſſes, during the great apoſtaſy, *tormented* the Antichriſtian generation *who dwelt on the earth*: and the Dragon is ſtill *wroth with the woman*, and attempting to make war *with the remnant of her ſeed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt*. The Devil, though now reſtrained from deceiving one part of mankind, and deſtroying another, to the degree he once did, is ſtill working in the hearts *of the children of diſobedience*, and laying ſnares for the people of God. He is oppoſing the kingdom of Chriſt, by the profane, who ſcoff at it; by the teachers of error, who labour to ſubvert it; and by the lukewarm, who, neglecting their duty, ceaſe to defend it, yea even betray it to the enemy. If the teſtimony we maintain, is hated and oppoſed by many, this is no more than we are taught to expect. The world hates Chriſt; and the cauſe it approves, is not his, nor the party it commends, on his ſide.

The word of God is our teſtimony. We muſt bear witneſs to all thoſe truths which it declares, and againſt all

all thoſe evils which it condemns. It is moſt injurious to accuſe us, as if we neglected this word, becauſe we apply it in a teſtimony ſuited to the times and circumſtances of our lot. In doing ſo, we follow the *footſteps of the flock* of Chriſt. The great queſtion between Iſrael and their Heathen neighbours, was, Whether JEHOVAH was the Creator, Governor, and Judge of the univerſe, or not? Upon the determination of it, the whole controverſy depended. The God of Iſrael being acknowledged to be the true God, the whole ſyſtem of Heathen idolatry and ſuperſtition, was, at once, declared impious; and the fear and ſervice of the God of Iſrael became an acknowledged duty. Therefore, the leading article of the teſtimony maintained by the church of Iſrael, was, That JEHOVAH, their God, was the only *living and true God. Ye are my witneſſes*, ſaith the Lord, *that I am God.* The great queſtion between the Apoſtles and the unbelieving Jews, was, Whether Jeſus was the Chriſt, the promiſed Meſſiah, or not? On the determination of it, all other controverſies between them about the law, about the nature of the Meſſiah's kingdom, and about the calling of the Gentiles, depended. Therefore, the leading article maintained by the Chriſtians againſt the Jews, was, That Jeſus was the Son of God, the promiſed Redeemer. Thus, it is ſaid of Paul, immediately after his converſion, that *he confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damaſcus, proving that Jeſus, whom their rulers had condemned and crucified, was the very Chriſt.* The great queſtion between the witneſſes of Jeſus and Antichriſt, was, Whether the word of God, or the traditions and commandments of men, are the rule of our faith and practice? The man of ſin, perceiving he could not ſtand if he was tried by the former, did, with the fury of a roaring lion, at one time, and with the ſubtilty of a ſerpent at another, fight for the latter, claiming an infallibility to himſelf, or to councils of his creatures. Therefore, the teſtimony maintained by the Lord's remnant, was, in ſubſtance, this, That his word is our only guide, and is to be believed and obeyed rather than any decrees or commandments of men.

At the Reformation, the teſtimony maintained by the witneſſes in former times of darkneſs, was enlarged, more clearly ſtated for the truth of the goſpel, and carried in it a more full and particular condemnation of the great apoſtaſy.

apoſtaſy. This appears in the confeſſions of the Reformed Churches. Theſe contain a teſtimony for the truth, which former adverſaries were not able to ſuppreſs, and which preſent and future adverſaries will in vain fight againſt. *No weapon* that is *formed againſt Zion ſhall proſper; and every tongue that riſeth againſt her in judgment, ſhe ſhall condemn.*

CHAP. II.

Of the State of the Church of Scotland from the Reformation 1560, to the year 1637.

THE Church of *Scotland*, of which we are a branch, beſide the teſtimony ſhe maintained in common with the other Churches of the Reformation, was called to teſtify, in a ſpecial manner, for this important truth, That the *Lord Jeſus* is the only Head of the Church; againſt the uſurpation of the civil powers, who claimed a right to make laws for it, and to hold it in ſubjection to their will. Soon after the Reformation, attempts were made to bring that Church under the yoke of bondage, to creatures of the magiſtrate, under the name of Biſhops. But ſuch attempts were boldly reſiſted; and, though ſometimes carried very far, did, for many years, fail of ſucceſs.

The clouds, however, began to gather over that Church toward the end of the ſixteenth and the beginning of the ſeventeenth century. *James* VI. of Scotland, ſucceeding about that time to the throne of England, North and South Britain were ſo far united, as to live in peace under one ſupreme magiſtrate. But this event had a malignant influence on the Church of Scotland. The kings of England have, ſince the Reformation, claimed a right of ſucceeding to the Pope in one of his names of blaſphemy, *viz. Head of the Church.* This ſtrange prerogative was very pleaſing to the prince already mentioned, he being remarkable for vanity, weakneſs, and ſelf-conceit. As the laws of England gave him a ſupreme power over the Church in that kingdom, he imagined it his right to claim and to exerciſe the ſame power over the Church of Scotland. The deſign was, to faſhion the laſt of theſe Churches according to the pattern of the firſt, whoſe external order and

and appearance was very like that of *Rome*, it having been moſt imperfectly reformed. By *deceit and* by *violence*, and by a mixture of both, an Epiſcopacy was introduced into Scotland. Not, indeed, all at once. The power at firſt given to the biſhops ſeemed very little; but it was, by degrees, increaſed, till they became terrible. Theſe Popiſh ceremonies, which the Church of England has ſo zealouſly retained, were alſo impoſed, according as the power of the biſhops ſeemed able to force ſubmiſſion to them.

After the ſucceſſion of the next prince to the throne, *viz. Charles* I. who ſucceeded his father in 1625, matters became ſtill worſe. Charles not only purſued his father's meaſures in Church and State; but more impatient of contradiction, and more reſolute in making attempts againſt the rights and privileges of his people, he proceeded from violence to violence, till he turned Britain into a field of blood and confuſion. Under him, the biſhops roſe to be more formidable tyrants than ever before. If any man ventured to teſtify againſt their impoſitions; no ſooner did the report reach them, than the inſtruments of their vengeance were employed to ſeize and puniſh him. In England, where their tyranny was come to its maturity, the puniſhments they uſed were of the moſt cruel and barbarous kind; ſuch as none but men of an infernal diſpoſition will chuſe to inflict on any of their fellow-creatures.

As the order and diſcipline of the Church of Scotland was ſubverted by the Prelates; ſo the doctrine of juſtification by free grace was oppoſed by them, both in England and Scotland. This was a part of that conformity to the Church of Rome, which the leaders of the faction were ſtudying; though their followers could not be quickly brought over from the Proteſtant faith, in a point juſtly reckoned of ſo great importance; ſo fully expreſſed in all the confeſſions of the Reformed Churches, and ſo zealouſly defended by thoſe divines who had wrote againſt the Church of Rome. The ſyſtem of doctrine at that time introduced into Britain, was then, and is ſtill known by the name of *Arminianiſm*; but it is in nothing materially different from the doctrine taught in the Popiſh Church, concerning the important articles of election, redemption, effectual calling, and the perſeverance of the

ſaints. Both Papiſts and Arminians agree in ſubverting the free grace of God, and in aſcribing to men that glory which is due to him alone. The corrupt doctrine which then began to ſpread in Britain, has been, like a plague, waſting the Churches there ever ſince; and this country has caught the infection: but, through the goodneſs of God, a teſtimony has hitherto been maintained againſt it. He hath *given a banner* to *be diſplayed becauſe of the truth*; and it is our duty to ſtand by it.

The Prelates, to clear the way for accompliſhing their devices againſt the Church, ſet themſelves to deſtroy the remaining liberties of their country. They taught, that unlimited obedience was due to the ſovereign; that the privileges of the ſubjects flowed from his royal beneficence, and might be recalled at his pleaſure. With them, there was hardly any ſin to be compared with that of thoſe who oppoſe the unrighteous exactions of an arbitrary court. Their great reaſon for urging the doctrine of paſſive obedience, by which they flattered weak princes into meaſures which ruined them, was, That the ſovereign, being inveſted with unlimited power, they, his creatures, might uſe it as they pleaſed. They hoped, that men, tamed to an abſolute ſubjection of their life and property to the prince, would more eaſily be compelled to ſubmit their conſciences to ſuch a ſpiritual lordſhip as theſe Prelates had aſſumed to themſelves.

During theſe days of trial, there was much fainting and yielding to temptation among profeſſors of religion in Scotland: and ſome not only changed with the times; but, as commonly happens in ſuch caſes, were very zealous to draw others along with them into apoſtaſy. Yet a conſiderable number continued faithful in the cauſe of Chriſt; and teſtified, as the Lord gave them opportunity, againſt the prevailing iniquities of thoſe times. Of theſe, ſome were baniſhed, ſome were impriſoned, and ſome found protection at home, ſeveral men of rank and influence exerting themſelves to ſave them from the fury of Prelates. The power of godlineſs and the ſpirit of prayer continued among this remnant; on which account, they were hated and ſcoffed at by the prelatical faction, who were generally careleſs and formal in their religious ſervices, and many of them profane.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the State of the Church of Scotland from 1637 *to* 1650.

THE greateſt triumph of the enemies of Chriſt is commonly a preſage of their immediate ruin. The Prelates of England and Scotland, having deviſed a *ſervice-book* for the laſt of theſe kingdoms, not only as bad, but, in ſeveral articles, worſe than that of England, ſeemed to have almoſt accompliſhed their deſigns; unleſs, as was with reaſon ſuſpected, concerning ſome of them, they intended to reconcile the Churches of Britain to that of Rome. But they were *ſnared in the work of their hands*: their new ſervice-book proved their ruin. Though they readily obtained a royal proclamation, commanding it to be uſed in all the particular congregations of the Church of Scotland, under pain of rebellion; yet ſo much was it hated, that ſcarce ever did a nation more unanimouſly agree in any thing than the Scots did in rejecting it. It awakened an abhorrence of the Popiſh and tyrannical principles of the biſhops among all ranks of men. Many who had formerly ſubmitted to them, would do ſo no more, when they ſaw to what point they were driving. The timorous, caſting off their fears, appeared openly and reſolutely in behalf of the Reformation-cauſe, which they ſaw in imminent danger. The *National Covenant* of Scotland, entered into in the year 1581, was renewed in a Bond, ſuited to the circumſtances of the time of which we now ſpeak; and this was done by all ranks in the land, with acknowledgments of their manifold breaches of it, and with profeſſions of ſorrow for their ſin.

Though the King, inſtigated by the Prelates, laboured to hinder every thing which appeared like a Reformation in Scotland, uſing fair ſpeeches and threatenings by turns; yet he prevailed not. A General Aſſembly of the Miniſters and Elders having met at Glaſgow, November 1638, condemned the whole courſe of defection which had taken place during the forty years preceding; cenſured the biſhops, according to the crimes proved againſt them; declared Epiſcopacy unlawful, it having no authority from the word of God, and having been found ſo pernicious to the intereſts of religion. They alſo reſtored Preſbyte-

rial government, which they declared to be according to the rule of God's word.

The King, who was reſolved to bring his ſubjects to that unlimited ſubjection to his will, in all things civil and ſpiritual, which he and his creatures alleged was their duty, took up arms againſt the Scots. But, finding them better prepared for war than he expected, and ſeeing the Engliſh very backward to aſſiſt him in deſtroying the liberty of their neighbours, which they juſtly ſuppoſed would make way for completing their own ſlavery; he deſiſted from his purpoſe. Purſuing, however, the ſame unhappy meaſures in England as he had done in Scotland, a civil war was raiſed in the former kingdom, which ſpread like a conflagration from one end of the iſland to the other; and raged, till King, Lords, and Commons, falling each in their turn, a kind of military government ſucceeded.

The kindneſs of the Lord towards his Church was remarkably diſplayed in the midſt of theſe confuſions. He cauſed the *walls* of his *Jeruſalem* to be *built, even in troublous times.* Thoſe in England who were ſtanding up againſt a tyrannical Prince, in defence of their juſt rights, (at the head of whom was the Parliament, the repreſentatives of the nation), entreated the aſſiſtance of the Scots, which was granted. And the friends of religion and liberty, in both Britain and Ireland, entered into a *Solemn League* and *Covenant*; the deſign of which was to aſſiſt and encourage one another in maintaining and promoting the Reformation, and in defending themſelves againſt that tyranny which threatened not only to enſlave them, but to take the light of the goſpel from them. An *Aſſembly* of *Divines* being met at *Weſtminſter* in *England*, the Church of Scotland ſent *Commiſſioners* to join with them in ſuch deliberations and determinations as might be found neceſſary and conducive to the intereſts of religion; particularly, to conſult on what might be moſt effectual for uniting the Churches of both nations in one *Confeſſion* of *Faith*, *Form* of *Church-government*, and *Order* of *Worſhip*. In this *Aſſembly*, the Confeſſion, commonly called the *Weſtminſter Confeſſion*, was agreed upon; with the *Catechiſms*, *Larger* and *Shorter*, the *Directory* for *Worſhip*, and *Form* of *Church-government*: all which were received by the Church of Scotland; and ſerved, from that time forward,

forward, to declare to the world her faith and order. In theſe, both were more fully expreſſed, and the truth more directly ſtated againſt the errors of the times, than in the *old Confeſſion* and *Books of Diſcipline* received by that Church; which were compoſed at a period, when the Papiſts were almoſt the only enemies ſhe had to encounter. The doctrine taught in both Confeſſions of Faith, is, however, the ſame; and the order of worſhip and form of Church-government, agreed upon by the *Aſſembly* at *Weſtminſter*, are, in nothing material, different from the former order and government of the Church of Scotland.

Thus, Reformation was, at this time, carried forward with a commendable zeal; and the bleſſing of God was remarkable on thoſe engaged in it: many were turned *from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan to God;* the truth of whoſe faith was manifeſted in a *converſation becoming the goſpel: iniquity* was, in many inſtances, forced to *ſtop its mouth as aſhamed:* a number of burning and ſhining lights were raiſed up in the Church; not a few of whom yet ſpeak to us by their writings. We are not, therefore, to be blamed for conſidering that as a remarkable period of the Church, affording a multitude of examples worthy of our imitation.

We do not, however, approve every thing in the proceedings of the Church in theſe times. Imperfections adhere to the beſt works of men; and there are many things which might be excuſable, and even expedient in the peculiar circumſtances of the Church in that period, which would be quite improper in a more orderly ſettled ſtate of public affairs. The enemies of the Reformation being then almoſt univerſally enemies to the civil liberties of their country, and the preſervation of the Church from perſecution depending upon the preſervation of the natural rights of mankind; civil and ſpiritual matters were ſo intermixed, that it was not eaſy always to obſerve the proper diſtinction between them. But the nature of the Chriſtian Church requires, that we ſhould be very careful to diſtinguiſh theſe; and the experience of paſt times may ſerve to ſet the propriety and advantage of doing ſo before us in a clearer light, than that in which our anceſtors ſaw them.

The inhabitants of theſe United States have ſpecial reaſon to remember with gratitude, what the Lord did in that period of which we have been ſpeaking. The fruits

of the deliverance then wrought for thoſe engaged in the cauſe of Reformation and Liberty, ſtill remain, and are amply enjoyed by the people of this country. Had that cauſe been then cruſhed in Britain, ſo would it have been in ſuch of theſe States as were then ſettled, (they being at that time provinces of Great Britain); and the growth of others ſince planted would either have been wholly prevented, or they would have grown up in ſuperſtition and ſlavery. Inſtead, therefore, of paſſing over what happened in Britain at that diſtant period, as of no importance to us, we judge ourſelves bound to obſerve it with particular attention; and to thank the Lord, that he broke *the yoke of oppreſſion*, which was preparing for that and the following generations. We may, by attending to things paſt and preſent, ſee, that the Lord our God is indeed *wonderful in counſel, and excellent in working*. Does *every man* here *ſit under his vine and under his fig-tree*, none making *him afraid?* Have we liberty to worſhip God, according to the order we judge moſt agreeable to his word, no man forbidding us? And is it not owing to this, that God delivered our fathers from oppreſſion; and thus taught us the value of liberty, and the neceſſity of watching in its defence? The deadly wound then given to tyranny in Britain, paved the way for the memorable and glorious Revolution of 1688, and for the freedom and independency of theſe United States. The teſtimony of Jeſus alſo, as then ſtated and maintained againſt *Epiſcopacy* and *Arminianiſm*, has not been entirely deſerted at any time ſince. The Lord has raiſed up one generation of witneſſes for it after another; and a review of what the Lord hath done for them, with their contendings and ſufferings in his cauſe, is uſeful, both for confirming our minds in the truth, and for encouraging us to appear boldly on its ſide. *Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof: mark ye well her bulwarks: conſider her palaces: that ye may tell to the generation following*, the goodneſs of God, in defending and delivering his Church.

CHAP. IV.

Of the State of the Church of Scotland, from the year 1650, *to the Revolution* 1688.

THE admiſſion of the malignant party in Scotland to places of power and truſt, 1651, proved extremely hurtful

hurtful to its civil and ſpiritual intereſts. Theſe men, though known to be enemies to the cauſe of the Reformation, were admitted into the Church; upon a profeſſion of repentance, which there was no good reaſon to believe was ſincere. This gave great and juſt offence: and the Miniſters, who had proteſted againſt certain reſolutions of the General Aſſembly leading to it, ſuffered, in ſeveral inſtances, hard treatment from their brethren.

The army employed by the *Engliſh Parliament* having, before this time, aſſumed the ſupreme power to themſelves; and having tried the King, and condemned him to die by the hands of the executioner: the Scots expreſſed a regard to his ſon *Charles* II. which he never deſerved; calling him home from exile, and receiving him as their ſovereign. That profane wicked prince, lying to God and deceiving men, engaged, in the moſt ſolemn manner, at his coronation 1651, to maintain their religion and liberties, and even ſwore the *Covenants* already mentioned. But the Engliſh army, who then carried all before them, ſoon over-ran Scotland, and obliged him to ſeek refuge in foreign countries. People, however, became ſo diſtracted by the frequent revolutions which were happening, and by the dread of a military government, that the greater part of the inhabitants of *Britain* and *Ireland* were glad to ſee him reſtored to the throne 1660. This change, however, was from bad to worſe: the repreſentatives of theſe nations, in a fooliſh haſte, put a rod into the hands of a tyrant; and, ſooner or later, almoſt every deſcription of men felt the weight of it: but the *Preſbyterians* of *Scotland* were the firſt and greateſt ſufferers.

The *Preſbyterial government* was quickly aboliſhed in that kingdom, and Epiſcopacy eſtabliſhed; the *National Covenant* and *Solemn League* were declared treaſonable oaths, and burnt with every mark of ignominy. Three hundred miniſters, who would not ſubmit to the Prelates, were, without any form of trial, caſt out of their Churches. The King was declared, by *Act* of *Parliament*, to be "the "only lawful ſupreme governor of the realm, as well in "matters ſpiritual and eccleſiaſtical, as in things tempo-"ral." And whoever would not acknowledge this uſurped authority over the Church of Chriſt, were declared rebels, and puniſhed as ſuch. In a word, the King was bad, his Miniſters of State worſe, and his Prelates worſt

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of all. They, though in the character of Ambaſſadors of the Prince of peace; yet, laying aſide even the appearance of meekneſs and tenderneſs, ſome of them did frequently ſit in judgment upon the lives of thoſe who teſtified againſt their uſurpations, and were commonly the moſt forward to condemn them to death.

During this and the next reign, thouſands were ſpoiled of their goods, baniſhed into foreign countries, or forced to wander up and down in the mountains and deſerts, concealing themſelves from the enemy. Many were impriſoned and tortured; many were executed as criminals; and many were, without any form of law, murdered in their houſes, or in the fields, by ſavage bands, commiſſioned to deſtroy them. A few of theſe perſecuted people took arms in their own defence 1666, declaring, at the ſame time, their readineſs to obey the King in all lawful commands. They were ſoon diſperſed; and ſuch of them as fell into the enemies hand ſuffered much barbarous treatment, and many of them were put to death. Towards the end of this perſecution, when the fury of enemies was riſen to a very great height, multitudes of people being put out of the protection of law, and hunted for every where by a brutal ſoldiery, as if they had been wild beaſts; a conſiderable number of them did refuſe to own the authority of tyrants, whoſe conduct towards them was a continued ſeries of injuſtice, from whom they received no benefit, and to whom, therefore, they owed no obedience. In this, their conduct was ſoon juſtified by the example of the whole nation.

The cauſe for which theſe people ſuffered, was their adherence to this truth, That the *Lord Jeſus* is the only Head of the Church. Believing this, they refuſed to acknowledge the civil Magiſtrate as the Supreme Judge in all cauſes ſpiritual, as well as civil; would not ſubmit to his creatures the Prelates, nor renounce the ſolemn obligations they had come under, to abide by the doctrine and order of the Reformed Church of Scotland, which the Prelates were ſeeking to deſtroy.

If the conduct of ſome of them was, in certain inſtances, blameable, this is not to be wondered at. Their enemies were, with a very few exceptions, a ſet of the moſt mercileſs profane men, which ever, in the holy providence of God, were permitted to chaſtiſe a nation. Cruel oppreſ-

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ſion often forces the wiſeſt men into meaſures which appear deſperate. Beſides, theſe people acted commonly without any leader or guide, according as each of them thought beſt. Their ſituation, ſcattered up and down among adverſaries, who narrowly watched their conduct, hindered them, in many caſes, from conſulting one another concerning what was moſt fit to be done. They were alſo, moſt of them, country people, acquainted with the ſcriptures, and inſtructed by the preaching of the goſpel; but deſtitute of other learning, and not much qualified to deviſe the moſt unexceptionable expedients for their relief.

CHAP. V.

Of the State of the Church of Scotland, from the Revolution to the year 1733.

THAT promiſe has often been accompliſhed to thoſe who wait on the Lord, *At the evening time it ſhall be light.* When matters were come to the laſt extremity in Britain and Ireland, civil liberty being almoſt cruſhed to death under the feet of a tyrant, and Popery, with all its attendant horrors and abominations, ſpeedily advancing to take poſſeſſion of theſe *Iſles*, the Lord ſtrengthened the ſpoiled againſt the ſtrong. *For the oppreſſion of the poor, for the ſighing of the needy*, he aroſe, and *ſet* them *in ſafety from* thoſe who puffed at them. When the wiſeſt of men knew not to what hand they ſhould turn, nor how it was poſſible to ſave theſe nations from the evils which they ſaw approaching; the Lord ſo ordered it, that the family who had ſo long poſſeſſed, and ſo long abuſed the ſupreme power, was driven into exile, and another Prince raiſed to the throne, almoſt without ſtroke of ſword.

The Church of Scotland, broken, ſcattered, and almoſt deſtroyed, by twenty-eight years of perſecution, was then raiſed up out of the ruins. Great was the mercy diſplayed in this deliverance. Well might the nation ſay, *The Lord hath done great things for our land:* well might the Church ſay, *The Lord hath remembered us in our low eſtate; for his mercy endureth for ever.* But there was, at that time, a great failing, in *not rendering to the Lord according to the benefits he had beſtowed.* Many, who had complied with

with the wicked meaſures of former times, and ſome who had been active in promoting them, were admitted into the Revolution-church; without due evidence, indeed without any evidence given by them of their repentance. The ſins and backſlidings of former times were not particularly acknowledged and lamented; nor was the Reformation of 1638, and the teſtimony of thoſe who ſuffered for their adherence to it, directly approved or vindicated from the reproach which malignant wicked perſecutors had caſt on both; neither was that important truth, for which ſo many ſuffered, even to death, expreſsly aſſerted, *viz.* That Jeſus Chriſt, being the only Head of the Church, no man, pretending to be the head of it, ought to be acknowledged in that character: though the uſurpation of the civil Magiſtrate, about that very time, taking upon him to diſſolve and prorogue the *Aſſemblies* of the Church at his pleaſure, loudly called for the moſt explicit declaration of it; a deſire to pleaſe men in power, and to order the affairs of the Church to their mind, proved the ſnare of that day.

It ought, however, to be thankfully remembered, that there were, at this time, and for a conſiderable number of years after, many eminent and godly Miniſters raiſed up in the Church of Scotland, who teſtified, more or leſs fully, againſt the defections of the times, according to their light; and were very ſucceſsful in gathering ſinners to *Jeſus Chriſt*. The ignorance, profaneneſs, and contempt of the Lord's day, which had greatly prevailed under the miniſtry of the curates, or underlings of the biſhops, were, in many places, removed by the light of the goſpel. And, while there was any conſiderable degree of zeal and watchfulneſs to be found in the judicatories of that Church, its enemies were reſtrained from doing the miſchief they intended.

The Union of *North* and *South Britain* into one kingdom, 1707, however proper and advantageous it might be in ſome reſpects; yet, in the way it was concluded, proved hurtful to the Church of Scotland. The members of her communion, when employed in the ſervice of *Government* in *England* or *Ireland*, were obliged to take what is called the *ſacramental teſt*; that is, to take the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, according to the ſuperſtitious forms preſcribed in the Engliſh liturgy, as a qualification for a civil office.

office. *This horrible profanation* of that holy ordinance was not duly teſtified againſt; nor thoſe who ſubmitted to an impoſition ſo unreaſonable and ſo wicked, cenſured. The *Union* alſo introduced certain Government-oaths into Scotland, which were a ſnare to many; as they, more or leſs directly, contained an acknowledgment of the ſupremacy claimed and exerciſed by the Kings of Britain over the Church of England.

The Members of the Britiſh Parliament being generally of the communion of the Epiſcopal Church of England, and one claſs of them Dignitaries in it, it was not to be expected, that they would act the part of friends to the Preſbyterian intereſt. Accordingly, in the year 1711, when a party, who entertained a deadly hatred at the Engliſh diſſenters, and at the Church of Scotland, prevailed, the Parliament grievouſly injured both: and took from the people belonging to the latter, the liberty of chuſing their own paſtors; reſtoring to ſome men of rank, or to the Crown, certain rights, which they claimed from the laws and cuſtoms of Popiſh times, to provide for vacant congregations ſuch Miniſters as they thought fit.

It was eaſy to ſee what would follow, when the care of providing Paſtors for the Church was lodged in the hands of men generally abandoned in their lives, and, many of them, avowed enemies to religion. For ſome time, indeed, this pretended right was not much urged, or was exerciſed with leſs rigour, by *Patrons*, as theſe uſurpers over the houſe of God were called. But when they found, that the Church of Scotland, as repreſented in her judicatories, was not only ſubmiſſive to their tyranny, but often ready to aſſiſt in executing it, they aſſumed more confidence; and preſented to vacant congregations men of very unworthy characters, making a jeſt of the oppoſition of the people.

The Church might have prevented this deadly evil, by poſitively refuſing to admit any to the miniſtry in her who accepted preſentations. As a Society, ſhe had a right to make ſuch laws and rules as were neceſſary for her preſervation, and to judge of the qualifications of her own members. The fear of offending the civil power will not excuſe any neglect or perverſion of the inſtitutions of Chriſt; of which this is evidently one, that the office-bearers in his Church are to be choſen by the members of it. Nor

was

was the danger, in this caſe, great. It is not likely, that the Government would have forced that wicked law upon the Church of Scotland, had her judicatories faithfully and reſolutely oppoſed it. A deſire of pleaſing, rather than a fear of offending thoſe in power, ſeems to have drawn them into a neglect of their duty.

The evils already mentioned did not come alone. *The faith once delivered to the ſaints* was as little regarded in theſe articles which more immediately relate to the ſalvation of ſinners through Jeſus Chriſt, as in thoſe which relate to the *order* and *government* of the Church. Mr *Simſon*, Profeſſor of Divinity in the Univerſity of Glaſgow, was charged, at the bar of the General Aſſembly, with teaching the ſtudents under his care, various *Socinian* tenets; ſuch as, "That there is an obſcure revelation made to all men of "the way of ſalvation: That a ſincere uſe of the means "God has appointed, cannot fail of rendering them ac- "ceptable to him; and that a ſincere uſe of the means "is not above their natural abilities." By theſe, and many other errors of a ſimilar nature, he introduced a ſcheme of doctrine, the deſign of which was, to exclude our Lord Jeſus Chriſt from having any more to do in the ſalvation of ſinners than this, That he taught the way to obtain it more perfectly than the wiſeſt of the Heathens could do. This charge againſt Mr *Simſon* was proved: and the Aſſembly declared, That ſome of his opinions were not neceſſary to be taught; and that ſome of his expreſſions were uſed by adverſaries in a bad ſenſe, and had a tendency to exalt corrupt nature to the diſparagement of free grace; and they forbade him to publiſh ſuch opinions, or uſe ſuch expreſſions any more. But this prohibition ſignified nothing. They ought either to have been ſatisfied of his repentance, or to have laid him aſide from his miniſtry. Their negligence was the more alarming, if it be conſidered how important an office Mr *Simſon* filled in the Church.

Falſe teachers, when continued in the Church, commonly proceed from evil to worſe. This man, far from retracting any of the *Socinian* principles he had formerly taught, proceeded to deny the divinity of our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; as was fully proved againſt him, at the bar of the Aſſembly. But, after all, that Court did not lay him aſide from the office of the miniſtry, or caſt him out of the communion of the Church. They only ſuſpended him from the exerciſe

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of the miniſtry, and from his office as a teacher. So lightly was the man cenſured, who denied our *Lord Jeſus* to be *God over all bleſſed for ever:* and the carnal policy of ſome deſiring to ſecure Mr *Simſon* in the emoluments of his office, which continued due by law to him while only ſuſpended, prevailed over the regard that was due to the glory of that *Name which is above every name.*

As the Aſſembly appeared friendly to error in not cenſuring the teachers of it; ſo they did, in ſundry inſtances, manifeſt a hatred of the truth, by condemning it. Particulary, in the year 1720, they condemned, in very ſtrong terms, ſeveral propoſitions extracted out of a book entitled the *Marrow of modern Divinity.* The book had been publiſhed in England 1645, had gone through many editions there, and was, at this time, reprinted in Scotland. It was, like other human writings, not perfect; but, upon the whole, it contained no other doctrine than what was to be found in the writings of thoſe men whom the Lord employed, and whoſe labours he bleſſed, in reſtoring the light of the goſpel at the Reformation. The ſubſtance of it was extracted out of their works. The ſum of the paſſages condemned, was, "That there is an aſſurance in the nature of "faith; that the offer of ſalvation is to every one who hears "it; that the goſpel, ſtrictly taken, contains no commands "nor threatenings, being only glad tidings of the grace of "God to fallen men; that believers in Chriſt are delliver-"ed from the law as a covenant of works, ſo as to be no "more under either its commanding or condemning "power; that the fear of hell as a puniſhment to which "they may become liable, and the hope of heaven, as a "reward in any wiſe due to their works, ought not to be "the motives of obedience to believers."

Theſe, and other ſuch propoſitions, the Aſſembly conſidered as ſo pernicious, that they ſtrictly forbade people to read the book in which they were contained. This was among the firſt evidences of general apoſtaſy from the goſpel of Chriſt among the Miniſters of the Church of Scotland; and, as commonly happens in ſuch caſes, it was only the beginning of evil.

The Aſſembly were alſo, in many inſtances, guilty of oppreſſing the flock of Chriſt. They forbade the ſacraments to be adminiſtered to thoſe who would not ſubmit to the miniſtry of intruders. This act reſpected only one

preſbytery; but it ſerves as a ſpecimen of that eccleſiaſtical tyranny which they would have extended over the whole nation, if they had not afterwards been reſtrained by a fear of driving ſtill greater numbers of people into the Seceſſion. Preſbyteries were commanded, under pain of the higheſt cenſures of the Church, to inrol as members, intruders to whom they could not, with a good conſcience, give the right hand of fellowſhip. Violent ſettlements became more and more common. The people were, in various corners, *as ſheep having no ſhepherd.* The intruders were generally as far from preaching the doctrine of Chriſt in their ſermons, as they were from acting by the Spirit of Chriſt in the manner of their entrance into the miniſtry. Not having *come in by the door into the ſheep-fold*, but *climbed up another way;* they were ſoon found to behave themſelves as hirelings, often as *thieves and robbers.* Either they did not *care for the flock*, or they *ſmote and deſtroyed it. Men of perverſe minds*, who had riſen up in the Church, finding they had nothing to fear from its General Aſſemblies, became more bold and active in teaching and ſpreading their errors. Thus, while the moſt ſtedfaſt and zealous were oppreſſed, the minds of the careleſs and unſtable were poiſoned.

There was, however, a great number of Miniſters and Chriſtians in the land too quickſighted not to diſcern theſe evils; and too deeply concerned for the proſperity of the Church of Chriſt, not to teſtify againſt them. Scarce any act of Aſſembly, injurious to the truth, had paſſed without ſome teſtimony againſt it. One repreſentation and petition, ſigned by forty-two Miniſters, and another ſigned by more than ſeventeen hundred people, were offered to the General Aſſembly 1732. But neither of them could obtain ſo much as a hearing. The Aſſembly determined to perſevere in the meaſures they had taken, treated with contempt all who either teſtified againſt their injurious proceedings, or refuſed ſubmiſſion to their decrees.

CHAP. VI.

Of the riſe of the Seceſſion, and of the Aſſociate Preſbytery.

WHEN other methods proved ineffectual, the moſt faithful and zealous Miniſters ſtudied to maintain as full

full and direct a teſtimony againſt the evils already mentioned as they could, in the courſe of their public miniſtry; but the ſame tyranny which had laboured ſo hard to ſuppreſs other teſtimonies, was not leſs active againſt this. Mr Ebenezer Erſkine being appointed to preach at the opening of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, choſe for his ſubject that text, *The ſtone which the builders refuſed is made the head of the corner*, Pſal. cxviii. 22. The ſermon is extant, and ſpeaks for itſelf. It contains no railing accuſations; but was a faithful teſtimony againſt the conduct of the leading party in the Church of Scotland; who, at that time, were proceeding from one unrighteous meaſure to another, with a very high hand. This teſtimony they could not bear. The ſermon was condemned, and the preacher declared worthy of cenſure: and becauſe he would not retract, by ſubmitting to a rebuke for what he had ſaid, and to an admonition, warning him to ſpeak ſo no more; he, and other three brethren who adhered to him in proteſting againſt the ſentence of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, afterward approved by the General Aſſembly, were, by order of the laſt of theſe courts, depoſed from the miniſtry of the goſpel in the Church of Scotland.

The ſevere meaſures againſt theſe brethren were, at that time, condemned by many of the moſt valuable Miniſters and Chriſtians in the communion of the eſtabliſhed Church. But a party, whoſe faith was dubious, and whoſe zeal was chiefly directed againſt ſuch as adhered ſtedfaſtly to the doctrine and order of that Church, in its beſt and pureſt times, carried all before them, by majorities in eccleſiaſtical courts.

Theſe four brethren had, with many others, long and earneſtly teſtified againſt the defections of the eſtabliſhed Church of Scotland, in communion with it. They were evidently unwilling to ſeparate from it; but now they found themſelves thruſt out: and they found, that they could not any more have liberty to teſtify, either in their ſermons or by proteſts, againſt ſuch acts and proceedings of the eccleſiaſtical courts as they judged ſinful. They did not reckon, that their relation to their congregations (a great majority of whom ſtedfaſtly adhered to them) was diſſolved, by the unjuſt ſentence paſſed againſt them; and therefore they continued in their churches, preaching the word, and diſpenſing the ſacraments, as formerly.

Soon after the ſentence of depoſition had been paſſed againſt them, they conſtituted themſelves into a Preſbytery, known by the name of *The Aſſociate Preſbytery* *. They were encouraged to do ſo by the promiſe of Chriſt; *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them:* which has a ſpecial reſpect to the office-bearers of the Church, meeting to conſult and determine about matters which concern its welfare. They found ſuch a ſtep neceſſary to preſerve that order which the Lord has appointed in his houſe. They judged it their duty to maintain a judicial, as well as a doctrinal teſtimony for the truth, in oppoſition to the errors and apoſtaſy of the times. They ſaw the flock of Chriſt oppreſſed and ſcattered by hirelings, who impoſed themſelves upon it; and by falſe teachers, who were adminiſtering ſpiritual poiſon, in place of the bread of life; and judged it, therefore, neceſſary, that, as a Preſbytery, they ſhould attend to the petitions of thoſe who deſired their aſſiſtance, and regularly appoint ſome of their number to diſpenſe goſpel ordinances to them.

It is true they had, at their ordination, promiſed ſubjection to the judicatories of the Eſtabliſhed Church of Scotland; but it was no leſs true, that this promiſe did not bind them to a blind or an unlimited ſubmiſſion; and could not oblige them to do what they judged contrary to the word of God, and to other parts of the engagements they came under at their ordination. It obliged them to abide by that Church, in the profeſſion of the truth ſhe required them to make, when they entered into the miniſtry; but not to follow her in departing from it.

The Aſſembly, 1734, did ſomewhat to heal the breach: they repealed an offenſive act or two: not becauſe they were contrary to the word of God, but on account of ſome irregularity which had been complained of in the manner of making them; and becauſe they had been found hurtful

* It may be obſerved (in this edition), that their conſtituting of themſelves into a Preſbytery was ſoon after a ſentence of the *Commiſſion* of the General Aſſembly, in *November* 1733; looſing their relations to their reſpective charges,—declaring them no longer Miniſters of the Church of *Scotland*, and their churches vacant, from and after the date of the ſentence. But it was in the year 1740, that a formal *depoſition* of them, and of other four Miniſters who had joined with them in their Preſbytery,—was paſſed by the General Aſſembly.

ful to the Church. They paſſed an act in behalf of what they reckoned due miniſterial freedom; but did not repeal former acts which laid Miniſters under an undue reſtraint. They directed the Synod of Perth and Stirling, of which the four depoſed brethren had formerly been members, to reſtore them to their office and to their reſpective charges as Miniſters of the Church; but they forbade the Synod to enquire either into the proceedings againſt theſe brethren, or the defences made by them. The former Aſſembly had itſelf cenſured them inaſmuch as it ordered them to retract their proteſt, and to profeſs their ſorrow for what they had done; and it had poſitively directed its *Commiſſion* (viz. a committee of its number) to ſuſpend them from the exerciſe of the miniſtry, unleſs they ſhould, in preſence of it, make the retraction, and profeſs the repentance which the ſentence of the Aſſembly required: and if they ſtill continued to refuſe doing ſo, the *Commiſſion* was directed to proceed to higher cenſures againſt them, which was accordingly done. But this Aſſembly would have the whole buried. Sin was to be found ſomewhere, but none were to acknowledge it.

Moſt gladly would theſe four brethren have entered, at the door now opened, into the communion of the Eſtabliſhed Church, if they could have done ſo with a good conſcience. For a while, ſome of them were in doubt as to what was their duty; but when they duly conſidered matters, they found, that almoſt every defection of which they complained, remained the ſame as before; that miniſterial freedom was not properly reſtored, by an act of Aſſembly, 1734; while it declared the proceedings of the former *Aſſembly* not anywiſe contrary to the due and regular exerciſe of this freedom; that no proper teſtimony was given againſt theſe errors, which Miniſters of the Church, and Profeſſors in the Univerſities were, from time to time, teaching; and that the healing meaſures of the Aſſembly, 1734, ſeemed rather to proceed from political views, than from a regard to truth. For theſe reaſons, they judged it their duty, as they had been violently thruſt out, to continue where they were, till they ſhould ſee the way more clear: and the conduct of ſubſequent Aſſemblies confirmed them in this reſolution.

The former meaſures were, after this time, purſued as keenly as ever. Congregations were oppreſſed by the intruſion of hirelings, and error paſſed without cenſure. A-

mong other inſtances of the laſt, the following is remarkable. Mr *Campbell*, Profeſſor of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory in the *Univerſity* of *St Andrews*, and a Miniſter of the Eſtabliſhed Church, had, in his writings, materially denied the Chriſtian religion: affirming, that "The laws of nature, in themſelves, are a certain and ſufficient rule to direct rational minds to happineſs; that the ſole and univerſal motive to virtuous actions is ſelf-love, intereſt or pleaſure; that to conſult the throne of grace, to lay matters before the Lord, and to implore his light and direction, are terms of art much uſed by enthuſiaſts;" with many other things of the ſame kind. Darkneſs is not more oppoſite to light, than thoſe opinions are to the holy ſcripture: which aſſures us, *that there is no ſalvation for any but in Jeſus Chriſt*; that *whatſoever we do*, we ſhould *do all to the glory of God*; and that, *in every thing, by prayer and ſupplication*, we ſhould make known our requeſts to him. But the *General Aſſembly*, 1736, did not, when Mr *Campbell*'s writings were under their conſideration, find him deſerving the leaſt degree of cenſure. Thus the faith once delivered to the ſaints was rather ſlighted and denied, than contended for by the ſupreme judicatories of that Church: and ever ſince, theſe judicatories have been proceeding, from one ſtep to another, in a courſe of apoſtaſy. Many things, injurious to the truth and cauſe of Chriſt, are to be found in their acts and proceedings theſe fifty years paſt, and there is no appearance of their returning to the Lord, from whom they have deeply revolted. They do not hearken to that command of him who ſpeaketh from heaven; "Remember from whence ye are fallen, and repent, and do thy firſt works."

The ſteps taken by the brethren who were caſt out of the Eſtabliſhed Church, were not raſh, or ſuch as men uſually take who are moved by reſentment. They had eleven preſbyterial meetings, chiefly for prayer and conference; and, at the twelfth meeting, Auguſt 1735, they appointed a committee of their number to prepare a draught of a judicial Teſtimony: and, after much conference on the ſubject, and many prayers for direction, this work was finiſhed, and paſſed as a judicial deed at their twenty-fourth preſbyterial meeting, December, 1736.

The chief deſign of this Teſtimony was to expreſs the adherence of the Aſſociate Preſbytery, and of thoſe who joined

ed with them, to the teſtimony of thoſe who had in former times contended and ſuffered for the truth in Scotland; to condemn thoſe ſins and backſlidings of paſt generations, in which the preſent was more or leſs directly following them; to aſſert and vindicate thoſe truths which had been ſlighted or denied by the judicatories of the Eſtabliſhed Church; to endeavour, according to the covenant-obligations they were under, the preſervation of the reformed religion in Scotland, in doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline and government; to tranſmit the truth, in this ſolemn manner, to poſterity; and, by an open confeſſion, to ſatisfy all who ſhould enquire as to the principles which they maintained, and the foundation upon which they, through the grace of the Lord Jeſus, deſired to ſtand.

Soon after this, four other Miniſters, leaving the Eſtabliſhed Church to join the Aſſociate Preſbytery, were admitted members of the laſt. In the year 1739, being all called in due form, theſe eight Miniſters appeared, as a conſtitute *Preſbytery*, at the bar of the *General Aſſembly*; and, in anſwer to the libel or charge laid againſt them, read and preſented an act of their Preſbytery: in which they declared themſelves authoriſed by the word of God, and bound in conſcience to decline the authority claimed over them by the judicatories of the Eſtabliſhed Church; theſe being guilty of apoſtaſy from the truth, of tyranny toward the heritage of God, of attempting to cruſh thoſe who were ſtudying faithfulneſs in the cauſe of Chriſt; of receiving into their number, or of retaining in it, many whoſe errors or ſcandalous practices rendered them juſtly deſerving of cenſure; and of ſurrendering the ſpiritual privileges of the Church of Chriſt to the civil powers, by either approving or ſilently ſubmitting to their unjuſt claims of authority over it.

The Aſſembly, though as great enemies to the cauſe maintained by the Aſſociate Preſbytery as ever, did not appear quite ſo impatient of hearing them, or ſo forward to cenſure them, as in the caſe of the four brethren who appeared at the bar of that Court, 1733. The reaſon was plain: formerly they thought to carry all before them by the mere force of authority; but now, ſeeing a breach made, and fearing it might become very great, they found it neceſſary to act with ſome appearance of moderation.

They did not proceed to cenſure at this time; but they recommended it to the next *General Aſſembly* to depoſe all

or any of theſe eight Miniſters who ſhould not, before or at the time of its meeting, ſignify their repentance and ſubmiſſion to the judicatories of the Eſtabliſhed Church. Accordingly, none of them making any ſuch acknowledgments, they were all depoſed by the Aſſembly 1740.

In an act of the Aſſembly 1739, one very grievous accuſation was brought againſt the Miniſters of the Seceſſion; but one which never could be proved, *viz.* "that they had "taken upon them to ſpeak in moſt injurious, diſreſpectful "and inſolent terms concerning the higheſt civil authority." There was ſomething cruel, but nothing new in this attempt to ſtir up the civil powers againſt ſuch as were ſtudying a faithful adherence to truth and duty. The pretence on which this accuſation was founded, was taken from the Declinature or Act of the Aſſociate Preſbytery, read and preſented to the General Aſſembly, in anſwer to the libel of the latter. A little before this time, an act of Parliament, commonly known by the name of Porteus-act, was, by the ſupreme legiſlative authority of Britain, ordered to be read from the pulpit on the Lord's day, once a month for a whole year, by every Miniſter of the Church of Scotland; under pain of being deprived of his ſeat in the judicatories, for the firſt offence, and of his ſalary, for the ſecond: and the civil courts were directed to execute both penalties on ſuch as ſhould refuſe. Moſt part of the Miniſters of the Eſtabliſhed Church, in one way or other, read that act: and none of the judicatories teſtified againſt this encroachment of the civil powers on the Church of Chriſt, or againſt thoſe who ſubmitted to it. This the *Aſſociate Preſbytery* mentioned, in their *Declinature*, as an uſurpation of the authority of Chriſt, on the part of thoſe in power; and as a material acknowledgment of that uſurpation, on the part of thoſe who ſubmitted to it, or who refuſed to teſtify againſt it.

They further condemned the reading of that act as a profanation of the Lord's day; as rendering the office of the miniſtry contemptible, and as an offence to Chriſtians. This was the ſole ground of the accuſation.

No ſooner was the ſentence of depoſition paſſed againſt the Miniſters of the *Aſſociate Preſbytery*, than inſtant notice of it was, by order of the General Aſſembly, ſent to the Magiſtrates of theſe places where they were ſettled. They were, accordingly, thruſt out of their churches by the civil

vil authority; ſome of them, the next Lord's day; the reſt, ſome time after. Their congregations, who generally adhered to them, built new places of worſhip for them; and they did not ſuffer any farther trouble from the ſupreme powers: only ſome magiſtrates of inferior rank have, at various times ſince, ſhewed that their willingneſs to perſecute the people belonging to the Seceſſion, was greater than their power. No one who had joined the Seceſſion was found in that conſpiracy againſt the *Proteſtant religion*, and *the rights of mankind*, formed by the adherents of the exiled Stuarts, in the year 1745. They were, moreover, as active, according to their ability, as any, in ſuppreſſing it: and this taught the Government, that, notwithſtanding the calumnious inſinuations of their adverſaries, they were as faithful ſubjects as any other denomination of men in the country.

Though a ſtrong oppoſition was made to the Seceſſion, it increaſed; and the diſpenſation of goſpel-ordinances was, in many inſtances, attended with a remarkable bleſſing among thoſe of that Society. As numbers, in various places of the land, appeared on the ſide of the teſtimony maintained by the *Aſſociate Preſbytery*, a ſupply of Miniſters was found neceſſary; and the Rev. Mr *Wilſon* of *Perth* was appointed to inſtruct ſtudents in divinity. According to the practice of the Reformed Churches, they neither did then, nor have ſince, admitted any to the ſtudy of divinity, till they had firſt ſtudied the Latin and Greek languages, and the moſt uſeful branches of philoſophy.

The doctrine of free grace through Jeſus Chriſt, having been much injured by the General Aſſembly of the Eſtabliſhed Church, the *Aſſociate Preſbytery* judged it neceſſary to ſtate and vindicate the truth on that head more fully and particularly than they had done in the Judicial Teſtimony. This they accordingly did, 1742, in an act entitled, *An act concerning the doctrine of Grace*; which was then, and is ſtill to be conſidered as belonging to the profeſſion made of the faith, and to the teſtimony maintained for the truth of the goſpel by thoſe of the Seceſſion.

They proceeded in the year 1743 to that much oppoſed duty of *ſolemn public covenanting*. Conſidering the engagements come under by their anceſtors in the *National Covenant* and *Solemn League*, (of which we have formerly ſpoke), as ſtill binding on them; they entitled the bond, into which they

they entered, A Bond for renewing theſe Covenants. But they followed the example of the Church of Scotland in former times of reformation, by adapting the bond into which they entered, to their circumſtances; and they prefixed to it an acknowledgment of theſe ſins, of which they, and the people among whom they lived, were guilty; particularly, the ſin of all ranks, in acting contrary to the engagements they were under to the *Moſt High God*. As ſome defections, which took place long before that time, are mentioned in this confeſſion, it has been repreſented as improper. The Church, it has been ſaid, has nothing to do with ſuch antiquated facts. But theſe objectors, if they adhere to the word of God as the rule of faith and practice, ſhould conſider that the righteous Judge of all the earth, *viſits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth*, yea, as may be ſeen in the preſent caſe of the Jews, to very diſtant *generations of thoſe* who approve and imitate the ſins of their progenitors: and they ſhould alſo remember, that it is a diſtinguiſhing character of the people of God, to *ſigh and cry for all the abominations done in the land* where they live.

There will commonly be found in a very ſmall remnant, ſome double-minded men, unſtable in all their ways. Mr *Nairn*, a member of the *Aſſociate Preſbytery*, whoſe character appeared dubious to ſome, both before and after he joined it, now acted ſuch a part as it was feared he would do. He diſſented from his brethren, becauſe they would not ſwear the National Covenant and Solemn League in the very words in which theſe were originally framed: and becauſe they condemned the principles of a party who diſowned the civil government of the country; alleging, that certain religious qualifications, not to be found in the rulers of Britain, were ſo eſſential to the being of magiſtracy in a Chriſtian land, that it was ſinful to acknowledge or obey thoſe who were deſtitute of them, even in ſuch things as are, in themſelves, lawful. To this party Mr Nairn joined himſelf; not, as appeared, from a perſuaſion that they were in the right way, but from very ſiniſter motives. By his aſſiſtance, they conſtituted themſelves into what they announced to the world, by the name of the *Reformed Preſbytery*. This man, however, left them ſome years after, and returning to the Eſtabliſhed Church with profeſſions of ſorrow on account of his ſeceſſion from it; became, through his inſtability

bility and manifeſt hypocriſy, ſo contemptible, that he was little regarded by any.

The *Aſſociate Preſbytery*, in *anſwer to Mr Nairn's reaſons of diſſent*, declared, That though they judged many things very far amiſs in theſe acts of Parliament which concerned the Church, and the intereſts of religion; yet, as members of civil ſociety, they did, without heſitation, ſubmit to the government in all its lawful commands, not only *for* fear of *wrath, but for conſcience ſake*. They declared, that as the majority of any ſtate or nation have a right to ſet up whatever form of government they judge beſt; and, as the government of Britain was ſo eſtabliſhed in conſequence of the revolution 1688; ſo it was the duty of Chriſtians to ſubmit to it, or to any other powers ruling by the choice or conſent of the people, and affording protection to them, in whatever place of the world their lot may be ordered. They farther declared, that the eſſential qualifications and duties of the magiſtrate were preſcribed by the light of nature; and that his whole office reſpected the good and evil works of men, only as theſe affect the peace and order of civil ſociety.

In the year 1742, and for ſome time after, there was a ſtrange motion among numbers of people belonging to the eſtabliſhed Church of Scotland, in the weſtern parts of that country. This was effected chiefly by the miniſtry of Mr Whitefield, and of his friends and admirers. People in hearing theſe ſpeakers, *cried out*, *fainted*, and *fell into convulſions*; and by and by were tranſported with a joy which ſeemed rather to ariſe from ſome impreſſions on the imagination, than from a well grounded confidence in the mercy of God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Many ſigns of deluſion attended this work: and deluded, it is certain, many of the converts were. The ſpeakers addreſſed themſelves rather to the imagination than the judgment; and ſome of them taught, that ideas or repreſentations formed in the mind, of Chriſt as man, were helpful to faith. Conſequently, the paſſions of many were greatly moved; while there was no good reaſon to conſider them as perſons whoſe minds were enlightened in the knowledge of Chriſt, and whoſe hearts were ſubdued to the obedience of faith. The general character of the ſuppoſed converts was marked by an high contempt of the moſt ſtedfaſt and exemplary Chriſtians, who queſtioned the nature of the work at that time carrying on;

on; and by a ſtrong averſion to any proper teſtimony for the truth of the goſpel. *As the prieſt, ſo were the people.* Mr Whitefield made light of the difference between Calviniſts and Arminians, Proteſtants and Papiſts. He cried down all controverſies about forms of Church-government, and the external manner of worſhip, as pernicious to godlineſs; and he induſtriouſly promoted a ſcheme, for uniting all parties in the way of neglecting ſuch articles of the faith once delivered to the ſaints, as, through the blindneſs or perverſeneſs of men, have been ſubjects of debate. According to this ſcheme, that great cloud of witneſſes, in Britain and Ireland, who, at the hazard, often at the expence of all that was dear to them in the world, refuſed ſubmiſſion to Epiſcopal ſuperſtition and tyranny, muſt have contended, ſuffered, and died, as fools. But we are firmly perſuaded, the Judge of all the earth did not account them ſo. This Latitudinarian ſcheme, which is ſtill in repute, was very expreſsly teſtified againſt by the *Aſſociate Preſbytery;* and, in this teſtimony, we deſire to perſevere.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Aſſociate Synod, and of its Proceedings.

THE Aſſociate Preſbytery having increaſed to a very conſiderable number, divided themſelves into ſeveral Preſbyteries, ſubordinate to a Synod; ever ſince known by the name of the *Aſſociate Synod.* This happened in the year 1744. It may here be obſerved, that a preſbytery and a ſynod are materially the ſame: both are meetings of the preſbyters or elders of the Church: both may, therefore, be called preſbyteries; but, to preſerve diſtinction in language, a larger meeting, in which the members of ſeveral leſſer ones are convened, is called a *Synod.*

An affair which came before this Synod the following year, occaſioned much trouble, and ended in a diviſion of that body. The oath to be ſworn by ſuch as were admitted burghers or freemen of towns in Scotland, had, in ſome places, this clauſe: "Here I proteſt, before God and "your Lordſhips, that I profeſs and allow with my heart, "the true religion preſently profeſſed within this realm, "and authoriſed by the laws thereof; that I ſhall abide "thereat

" thereat, and defend the ſame to my life's end; re-
" nouncing the Roman religion, called Papiſtry." It was ſtrange, that any belonging to the Seceſſion ſhould ever have imagined the ſwearing of ſuch an oath conſiſtent with the profeſſion which they had made. But ſome of them having ſworn it, and others defending it, as conſiſtent with their profeſſion, or being uncertain as to what was duty in this matter, the Synod was obliged to take it into conſideration; and, having done ſo at ſeveral meetings, they gave a deciſion in April 1746, importing, "That the
" ſwearing of the clauſe already mentioned, was incon-
" ſiſtent with the teſtimony they maintained, and with
" the ſolemn engagements they had come under in the
" bond for renewing the covenants: they further warn-
" ed ſuch of their people as had taken that oath, that,
" before they entered into the bond, it would be neceſſa-
" ry for them to ſignify their ſatisfaction with the judg-
" ment of the Synod; and acknowledge the miſtake
" which they had, through inadvertency, fallen into by
" ſwearing that oath."

It is plain, that the declaration of the Synod was no more than truth. In the Judicial Teſtimony, many things are conſidered as amiſs or defective in the religion profeſſed by the Eſtabliſhed Church of Scotland, and authoriſed by the laws of that realm. Without controverſy, this, and no other, was the religion intended in the oath: nor does it alter matters to the ſwearer, that it is called the *true religion*: every oath, if men will act uprightly, muſt be taken in the declared ſenſe of the impoſers and adminiſtrators of it; and, in this inſtance, their ſenſe, as well as the evident ſenſe of the words, was, that the religion eſtabliſhed by the laws of Scotland, was the true religion; and to be acknowledged as ſo abſolutely true by the ſwearer, that he allowed or approved it with his heart, and promiſed to continue in it to the end of his life. The oath was a material approbation of all the civil powers had done, both at the Revolution, and after that time, concerning the eſtabliſhment of religion. It will be hard to prove, that thoſe acts of Parliament, by which the people were deprived of liberty to chuſe their own paſtors; and by which miniſters were commanded, under pain of being deprived of their ſeat in the judicatories, to read, on the Lord's day, any paper the Le-

giſlature ſhould enjoin; did not belong to the religion mentioned in the oath. The way of ſettling miniſters, and the authority by which they are to be directed in the exerciſe of their office, are two very material points of religion; but were a part of the religion authoriſed by the laws of the realm, only as conſiſtent with the acts of Parliament referred to. Moreover, if one ſhould enquire what was the religion profeſſed by the Eſtabliſhed Church, and ſworn to in the oath; ſurely he behoved to conſider ſuch acts of the General Aſſembly, as were deſigned to expreſs the doctrine of that Church; (among which, the act, condemning ſeveral important truths extracted from the book, entitled, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, is one), as belonging to the profeſſion made in it. No man of integrity, if he conſider the matter without prejudice, can deny that withdrawing from the communion of the Eſtabliſhed Church as ſinful, and, at the ſame time, ſwearing the oath in queſtion, were inconſiſtent. The deſign of the religious clauſe in that oath, was to exclude ſuch as did not approve the national profeſſion of religion from certain civil privileges. And all who, in ſwearing it, evaded this deſign, were guilty of ſomething ſo very like equivocation or mental reſervation, that it will be difficult to find any other name for it.

Plain, however, as the propriety of the Synod's deciſion was, five Miniſters and two Elders proteſted againſt it. And they, with ſome others who took part with them, laboured very hard to have it rendered of none effect; by inſiſting, at ſeveral meetings, that the Synod ſhould declare it no term of communion: that is to ſay, that, though the Synod had declared the ſwearing of the religious clauſe in the oath already mentioned, inconſiſtent with the profeſſion made by them, and therefore ſinful; and though this judgment ſtood in their minutes unreverſed, yet they ſhould admit the ſwearers of it to communion, without requiring them to acknowledge this ſinful inconſiſtency; or, in other words, the Synod ſhould, at the ſame time, declare a thing to be ſinful, and not to be ſinful. After much confuſion, occaſioned by the irregular conduct of theſe proteſting brethren, and alſo by the miſmanagement of ſome, who, though of a different judgment from them about the chief ſubject of controverſy,

yet

yet were inſnared into a voting with them in ſome previous queſtions; an entire ſeparation took place, April 1747.

The party of the proteſting brethren inſiſt, that they obtained, at that time, a vote of the Synod, declaring, that the deciſion of April 1746 ſhould not be a term of communion. But this could not, with any propriety or juſtice, be called a vote of the Synod. It was carried by nine Miniſters and thirteen Elders only; while thirteen Miniſters and ten Elders, all of an oppoſite judgment, could not vote on the queſtion, as they were ſtanding under a proteſt againſt entering on the conſideration of it, till the reaſons of the proteſt taken in April 1746, with the anſwers, ſhould be read: theſe papers being ſo abſolutely neceſſary for the information of members, particularly, of ſome Miniſters and of many Elders, who had not been preſent at former meetings, in which the ſubject had been reaſoned upon. The proteſting brethren who voted on this occaſion, were very improper judges in a queſtion, the import of which evidently was, whether or not their diſſent ſhould be allowed to make void the Synod's deciſion. It is further to be conſidered, that neither Moderator nor clerk acted on this occaſion. For theſe reaſons, the vote already mentioned was not a vote of the Synod; it was a violent perverſion of order. And the brethren, on the other ſide, ſeeing the Synod put into ſuch entire confuſion, as threatened the ruin of the cauſe in which they were engaged, took ſuch meaſures as they judged moſt proper for preſerving it. The Moderator of the laſt meeting, who was one of their number, and to whom of right it belonged to preſide, when the other declined doing ſo, read a paper, in which he declared, That, as the preſent conduct of the prevailing party was contrary to order, and ſubverſive of the whole Teſtimony maintained by them; ſo the power and authority of the Aſſociate Synod did properly belong to thoſe who were oppoſing the irregular and pernicious meaſures carrying on: he, at the ſame time, called theſe laſt, and ſuch other members as ſhould adhere to them, to meet next day in another place. Upon which he, with twelve other Miniſters and ten Elders, inſtantly withdrew. Both parties have ever ſince claimed the title of the *Aſſociate Synod*. To whom that deſignation properly belongs, may be learned from what has been already ſaid; and alſo, from this plain fact, that the diviſion was

at laſt found to be, twelve Miniſters who oppoſed the deciſion of April 1746, ſeparating from nineteen who adhered to it. There were, before this breach, thirty-two Miniſters belonging to the Synod. One of them, who lived in England, withdrew from the Seceſſion. The reſt divided in the manner now mentioned.

This cannot be juſtly repreſented as a trifling controverſy; unleſs it could be proved, that ſwearing by the name of God is a ſmall matter, which, we hope, none bearing the Chriſtian name will attempt to do. The queſtion ariſing from the conſideration of the oath which occaſioned the breach, was, Whether the profeſſion of religion, authoriſed by the laws, and made by the Eſtabliſhed Church of Scotland, deſerved to be, without exception, approved? And people muſt follow a very different courſe, according as they determine it. This has been fully manifeſted in the conduct of theſe two parties ſince the breach; the one having continued to profeſs a ſtedfaſt adherence to the Teſtimony in which they had formerly engaged, and having proceeded to ſolemn public covenanting, from time to time, as the Lord gave them opportunity; while the other have been frequently finding fault with that Teſtimony, and have laid aſide the practice of covenanting altogether.

But though it was not poſſible for the Synod to conſider the ſwearing of contradictory oaths as a light matter; yet ſurely, the excellency or uſefulneſs of an oath, impoſed by the Magiſtrates of certain towns, was not ſo great, that any could reaſonably judge themſelves bound to defend it, at the expence of making ſuch a breach in the Church; and, if the brethren who maintained the conſiſtency of ſwearing that oath with the Seceſſion Teſtimony, (a point which their conduct ſince ſhews they were not able to maintain), had ſo far acquieſced in the judgment of a majority of the Synod, as not to have inſiſted for an allowance to be given people in the Seceſſion to ſwear it, the breach would have been prevented.

The *Aſſociate Synod* of *Edinburgh* requires, both of Miniſters and Elders, that they ſignify their approbation of the deciſion in April 1746; and alſo their approbation of the Synod, as conſtituted in the way of teſtifying againſt the conduct of the party, whoſe oppoſition to this deciſion, and whoſe attempts to deſtroy its force, produced

ſuch

ſuch confuſion in ſome of the firſt diets of the meeting in April 1747. And, doubtleſs, this is upon the matter to declare, that the conduct of that party rendered them juſtly liable to cenſure: but an approbation of the cenſures paſſed on this, or the other man, is what neither the Aſſociate Synod, nor any well ordered Church of Chriſt, ever made a term of communion. Thoſe who are of a different mind concerning the two points now mentioned, cannot honeſtly ſeek admiſſion into that Synod; ſeeing, according to them, its very conſtitution is wrong.

Some years after the breach, the Aſſociate Synod found themſelves obliged to contend for the faith once delivered to the ſaints, againſt an attack made upon it by a revival of ſome Arminian errors, in a new form. It was aſſerted, that Chriſt was a Surety for all mankind; and that he died, not only for the elect, but for thoſe who periſh in their ſins. The name of a worthy Miniſter of the Church of Scotland, in the laſt age, was (whether juſtly or unjuſtly, is not quite certain) borrowed to ſupport this new ſcheme. A book, ſaid to be written by him, was then publiſhed for the firſt time; in which, the errors mentioned, and others connected with them, were taught.

Theſe opinions were the more inſnaring, as they were propagated by perſons, who not only profeſſed a warm zeal againſt the other articles of the Arminian ſcheme, but even profeſſed to differ from it in this one; alleging, that Chriſt died not, as the Arminians teach, in the ſame ſenſe for every one of the human race. The authors of this new ſcheme maintained, that our Lord Jeſus died, in one reſpect, for thoſe who periſh, and, in another, for thoſe who are ſaved. But this diſtinction was ſuch as they could never find made in ſcripture; and ſuch as they could never explain, ſo as others could well underſtand what they intended by it.

The Synod, ſeeing their people in danger of being led aſtray by fair, but ſeducing pretences, did, in a few propoſitions, ſtate, explain, and defend the ſcripture-doctrine concerning the ſuretiſhip and death of Chriſt, as it has been received in the Reformed Churches; declaring, "That "he was a Surety for the elect only, and died for none "but thoſe who were given him out of the world, and "who ſhall infallibly be ſaved by his death: That the "bleſſings purchaſed by him cannot be divided; whoever

" has an intereſt in one of them, having an intereſt in the " whole: That his interceſſion, ſo expreſsly declared to " be for the elect only, is of equal extent with his death: " That the death of Chriſt being, in itſelf, of infinite " value, is ſet forth in the goſpel, as what every one may, " and ought to take hold on, as a ſufficient ranſom for " him: and, That the ground of faith lies in this ſuffi- " ciency of the death of Chriſt, together with the gift " of him, and the offer of ſalvation through him, made " in the goſpel to ſinners as ſuch; not in any ſuppoſed " revelation of Chriſt's having died for all mankind." On this occaſion, one Miniſter belonging to the Synod diſſented from his brethren, ſtrongly inſiſting, that Chriſt died, in *ſome ſenſe*, for all mankind; though what that ſenſe was, he never could diſtinctly tell. He was earneſtly intreated to forbear teaching ſuch an opinion; but he refuſed. The conſequence of long dealing with him, was, that the Synod found no other way to preſerve purity of doctrine, but by depoſing him from the miniſtry of the goſpel, which they accordingly did. This controverſy gave occaſion to the Synod to explain very fully ſome articles of ſcripture-doctrine; particularly, the call of the goſpel to ſinners, and the warrant given them to believe; which had been partly miſrepreſented by the friends of this new ſcheme.

This account of the riſe and progreſs of the Seceſſion in Scotland, we judge neceſſary. Thoſe who are diſpoſed to ſeek further information concerning theſe matters, may find it in A DEFENCE OF THE REFORMATION-PRINCIPLES OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, by the Reverend Mr WILSON of PERTH; and in A DISPLAY OF THE SECESSION-TESTIMONY, by the Reverend Mr GIB of EDINBURGH. With reſpect to other proceedings of the Aſſociate Synod theſe thirty years paſt, we do not apprehend it neceſſary to inſiſt upon them: becauſe, though they deſerve to be enquired into by all who are friends to the cauſe in which they are engaged, and by all who would judge impartially of them; yet theſe matters do not ſo properly belong to the ſtate of their Teſtimony. Though they have maintained, and ſtill do maintain it, yet they have not, during that period, had any remarkable occaſion to enlarge it, or to ſtate it againſt any new ſcheme of oppoſition to the truth.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY *of* PENNSYLVANIA, *and of the Reaſons why they continue a diſtinct Body from the Synod of* NEW YORK *and* PHILADELPHIA.

SOME people, belonging to the Seceſſion in Scotland and Ireland, having, at various times, removed to this country; they, and others, who judged it their duty to join with them, made application to the Aſſociate Synod, ſtating the reaſons why they could not join in Church-fellowſhip with the general body of Preſbyterians here, and deſiring the Synod to take them under its inſpection. Their requeſt was granted; and two Miniſters were ſent to them, and directed, if they ſaw cauſe, to conſtitute themſelves into a Preſbytery, with the aſſiſtance of ruling Elders; which they accordingly did, 1754. And, as further applications were made, the Synod, from time to time, ſent others, for their aſſiſtance to labour in the work of the goſpel.

We never did ſeparate from other Preſbyterians here; for we never were in communion with them. If ſome people have left them to join us; ſo have ſome left us to join them. If we receive ſuch as prefer our communion to theirs; ſo do they ſuch as prefer their communion to ours. And ſurely, we have the ſame right to do ſo as they have. The circumſtance of their being many, and our being few in number, gives no more authority to the one than to the other.

The adherence to the Weſtminſter Confeſſion, required of Miniſters belonging to the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, is with an exception of what, not only the Synod itſelf, but any Preſbytery ſubordinate to it, may judge "not eſſential or neceſſary in doctrine, wor-"ſhip, and government." And who knows what this may be? Were the articles, deemed not eſſential nor neceſſary, ſpecified, it would then appear what was the public profeſſion made in that Church; but, while they are not, we cannot ſay what this is.

It is not agreeable to the views of that Synod, about confeſſions of faith, to maintain a public and joint teſtimony againſt the errors and defections of the preſent time.

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The Teſtimony maintained by us, was judicially condemned, in ſome of its moſt material articles, by the PRESBYTERY of NEWCASTLE, near thirty years ago; who, in a WARNING, publiſhed by them, repreſented our principles as pernicious, and our conduct, in leaving the Eſtabliſhed Church of Scotland, as ſchiſmatical. We do not ſuppoſe, that all the members of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, to which that Preſbytery now belongs, are of the ſame mind with the latter in every matter of difference between us and them; but, as that Preſbytery's oppoſition to what we judge truth and duty, was never anywiſe condemned by their brethren, it is but reaſonable to conclude, that the majority are much of the ſame mind with them.

It will not be denied, that ſome members of that Synod are of principles oppoſite to thoſe which we have expreſſed in the ſecond part of our Teſtimony, as what we believe to be the truth taught in the word of God, and maintained by the Churches of the Reformation, in their Confeſſions of Faith; particularly, by theſe Preſbyterian Churches of Britain, who have ſtedfaſtly adhered to the Weſtminſter Confeſſion. As to Church-communion, the neceſſity of a public joint confeſſion of the faith,—the duty of public covenanting,—the ſinging of the Pſalms of David in worſhipping aſſemblies, and ſeveral other matters, expreſſed in the laſt part of our teſtimony; it is evident, that the moſt part of the members of that Synod, are oppoſite, in their views and practice, to what we judge moſt agreeable to the ſcripture-rule, and moſt conducive to the real proſperity of the Church.

The deſign of what we have now ſaid, is not to diſpleaſe others, or to promote contention; but, when we are blamed for maintaining a ſeparate communion from others, common juſtice requires, that we ſhould be allowed to declare our reaſons for doing ſo; that any who will, may ſee them and judge, whether or not we are deſervedly blamed. We deſire to rejoice in whatever we ſee good and commendable, according to the word of God, in the Synod of New York and Philadelphia; and we are very far from thinking that there is nothing of that kind to be found in it: but, while matters ſtand as they now are, we cannot, for the ſake of a more entire agreement with it, lay aſide the Teſtimony we maintain for the truth of the goſpel; because,

cauſe, in doing ſo, we would neglect our own duty, and harden others in the neglect of theirs.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Union which produced the ASSOCIATE REFORMED SYNOD.

IN the year 1776, the ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY of PENNSYLVANIA was, by agreement, divided into two, *viz.* that of Pennſylvania, and that of New York. Some years after, a ſcheme of union was ſet on foot between theſe Preſbyteries; and a party, who called themſelves, THE REFORMED PRESBYTERY, and who were of the ſame principles with thoſe who take that deſignation to themſelves in Scotland, of whom we have already given ſome account. The plan on which the advocates for this union propoſed to effect it, was gradually diſcovered; and was found to be a laying aſide, or expreſſing, in ambiguous terms, every thing about which the parties mentioned could not agree. And the Aſſociate Synod, having always teſtified very plainly and earneſtly againſt ſuch *Latitudinarian ſchemes*, as injurious to the truth and cauſe of Jeſus Chriſt; thoſe of them, who were then members of it, could not but know, that ſuch an union as they propoſed would put an end to their connection with it. But this ſeems to have been the very thing they were deſiring: diſpleaſed with their former profeſſion and connections, (for reaſons beſt known to themſelves), they reſolved to caſt off the one and the other.

This union was agreed to by the Aſſociate Preſbytery of New York, 1780. And at a meeting of the Preſbytery of Pennſylvania, June 12. 1782, its friends had, by the caſting vote of the Moderator, a majority in this laſt. The members who voted againſt the union, proteſted and appealed to the Aſſociate Synod; but the other party, avowing, that they, as a Preſbytery, did not any longer acknowledge their connection with that Synod, as belonging to it; therefore, refuſed to admit any proteſt, in which there was an appeal to it. Upon this, the proteſtors, ſeeing the principles and conſtitution of the Preſbytery plainly deſerted by their brethren, judged it their duty

to

to do what they could for preſerving both, by withdrawing; which they accordingly did, having firſt declared, in a proteſt, that the power of the Aſſociate Preſbytery belonged to them, who adhered to its principles and conſtitution. Having retired to another place, and tranſacted what buſineſs came before them, they appointed the time and place of their next meeting, and concluded in the uſual manner. An account of their conduct having been laid before the Aſſociate Synod, no one member of that court found fault with it; but, on the contrary, it was unanimouſly agreed to, that they ought to be encouraged and ſupported. The circumſtance of the majority of any church-court deſerting their profeſſion, does not deſtroy the power of the reſt, or hinder them to continue their meetings, as formerly.

The brethren who oppoſed this union, readily acknowledge, that harmony among Chriſtians is much to be deſired: and, if any part of their received principles can be proved to be merely *their opinions*, and to have no foundation in the word of God, they will not only give up theſe opinions for the ſake of peace; they will even openly acknowledge, that they were wrong in ever making them a ſubject of controverſy in the Church. But they have not yet learned, that they ought to lay aſide a public Teſtimony for any truth or any duty taught in ſcripture, becauſe certain denominations of Chriſtians will not agree with them in it. The Lord has ſaid, *Love the truth and the peace.* To obtain the laſt, we muſt hold faſt and improve the firſt. So far as we walk contrary to this rule, the peace we obtain will be only a confederation againſt the cauſe of Chriſt. It ſhould be the ſtedfaſt reſolution of every one, to do nothing againſt the truth, but for it.

Further, this Preſbytery cannot judge it their duty to lay aſide the Teſtimony they maintain; while the neceſſity of it is ſtill greater than when it was firſt ſtated, in ſo direct a manner, againſt the errors and backſlidings of this age, by their brethren in Scotland. Apoſtaſy has been, in moſt inſtances, increaſing in this land, and among the Reformed Churches of Europe, ſince that time. *The enemy*, having *come in as a flood*, is ſtill attempting to deſtroy the Church, by a deluge of dangerous and wicked opinions; and we cannot be too careful, ſtedfaſt, and zealous

ous in oppoſing him. The Lord Jeſus is, from heaven, ſaying to us, *That which ye have already, hold faſt till I come*: and, with reſpect to thoſe backſliding Churches, whoſe communion we have left, his direction is plain, *Let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them.*

We do alſo conſider the engagements we came under at our ordination, as binding us to continue in the profeſſion we then made, unleſs we find ſomething in it ſinful, which we have not yet done; and to continue in the ſociety of our brethren, the other members of the Aſſociate Synod of Edinburgh, while they abide by it; as, through the good hand of God upon them, they ſtill do. Though their principles and conduct are induſtriouſly miſrepreſented by ſome here, who were once of their number; yet we are ſatisfied to remain in connection with them, as our *brethren and companions in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jeſus Chriſt*: and we hope the Lord will bleſs this connection to us and to them, for encouraging each other to ſtedfaſtneſs in his cauſe, and for promoting the knowledge of the goſpel.

As to the union which made ſuch a breach in this Preſbytery, it may be further obſerved:

Firſt, That there never was any proſpect, that it could be concluded in a deſirable manner. The principles of the Reformed Preſbytery about civil government, unknown in the Chriſtian Church till the riſe of their ſociety, uſed to be a chief topic of their public diſcourſes, and filled almoſt every page of the Teſtimony they publiſhed to the world: and becauſe we ſtated that to be the duty of Chriſtians, which they denied, *viz.* to acknowledge theſe as lawful magiſtrates, who ruled by the choice or conſent of the people of any ſtate or nation, and to ſubmit to them in every thing not inconſiſtent with our duty to God; we were repreſented by them, not in ſome private writings only, but in their public Teſtimony, the joint deed of the body, "as teachers of falſe doctrine, as "treacherous in covenant, as enemies to the Lord's work, "as barefacedly belying the ſcriptures of truth, as guilty "of a moſt dreadful and deceitful impoſition on the genera-"tion." Men who have ſo grievouſly accuſed us, and have never retracted a word of what they ſaid, could not be ſuppoſed willing to join with us in a Teſtimony they had ſo ſeverely reprobated. Either we or they, (themſelves being judges), muſt

muſt be extremely far from the Lord's way: we, if their charges againſt us are juſt; they, if they have ſo accuſed us without cauſe. If they judge that, in theſe accuſations, and in many others of the ſame kind, they did no injury to the cauſe and work of God in which we are engaged; we have juſt reaſon to refuſe entering into Church-communion with them, though they ſhould be ſo inconſiſtent with themſelves as to be willing to enter into communion with us. If they have changed their mind, their acknowledgment of the truth ſhould be as plainly declared as their oppoſition to it was. Such a ſolemn public charge againſt any denomination of Chriſtians, as is to be found ſtanding againſt us in their Teſtimony, is no trifling matter, and will not be accounted ſo by the Head of the Church. Nothing leſs than a plain declaration by the REFORMED PRESBYTERY, that they had fallen from the oppoſition they formerly made to the truth maintained by us, was ſufficient to convince us that they were friends, and ſo agreed with us that we might walk together in an holy and profitable fellowſhip.

Secondly, The meaſures taken to accompliſh this union, were irregular, and ſubverſive of Preſbyterial order. The Aſſociate Preſbytery of Pennſylvania, having, in April 1781, *unanimouſly* agreed as to the terms on which it could be effected; ſent theſe to the Reformed Preſbytery, with an intimation, that, if they were not agreed to, further conferences, with a view to union, could anſwer no valuable purpoſe. And as the Reformed Preſbytery, did reject them, the matter ſeemed to be at an end. But, about ſix months after this, three Miniſters, belonging to the Preſbytery, took upon themſelves, at a private meeting, to draw up other terms; and one of theſe brethren, at a conference with the members of the Reformed Preſbytery, ſettled the whole plan of the union with them. In conſequence of which, he and others of his party, entered into Church-fellowſhip with them. Thus, the buſineſs of the Preſbytery was taken out of their hands; and the work of a party, who believed themſelves able to carry their ſcheme by a majority, was laid before the Court, when met, that it might receive a formal approbation. When the affairs of a Church are managed in this manner, it is a ſure preſage of confuſion and ruin.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The firſt fruits of this union were ſuch as manifeſted a change in the principles of thoſe who had gone into it. The brethren who left us, did, a few days after the breach already mentioned, order a Warning to be read from the pulpit to the Aſſociate Congregation of Oxford, againſt two members of this Preſbytery; for the alleged crime of adhering to what had been the principles and conſtitution of the Aſſociate Preſbytery of Pennſylvania, ſince the firſt day of its erection. In that paper they ſay, "They "cannot but look upon the conduct of theſe brethren as "highly ſchiſmatical, and tending to ſow diſcord and di "viſion among Chriſtians; and therefore warn this con- "gregation againſt countenancing their miniſtrations, ay "and until they return to their duty and due ſubjection "to this Preſbytery in the Lord." To give it the more ſolemnity, it was ſigned, not only by the Moderator and clerk, but by the other Miniſters preſent. This was a depoſing theſe brethren from the miniſtry of the goſpel, only not according to the form of the Chriſtian proceſs obſerved in moſt of the Reformed Churches. As to the returning to ſubjection to them, they muſt have had a conſiderable portion of aſſurance to require it; ſeeing theſe brethren never promiſed ſubjection to them, any more than to the Roman Pontiff. Do they find any ſuch Preſbytery as theirs mentioned in our ordination-engagements? The party who went into the union, did alſo, ſoon after, reſtore to the miniſtry, a brother whom they and the other Miniſters of the Aſſociate Preſbytery of Pennſylvania, had, ſome time before, unanimouſly depoſed from that office; on account of various errors which he had taught, and perſiſted in defending. What acknowledgements he made to them, we know not. But we know, that numbers of people have been deceived by his errors, having in ignorance received them as new diſcoveries of truth; whereas, they may all be found in the writings of its adverſaries, of an older date than the preſent age. And though theſe people are hardened in their oppoſition to the truth of the goſpel, by the reſtoration of that brother to his miniſterial character; yet no proper warning againſt his errors is given, by thoſe who received him.

Surely if our brethren had put a due value on the truths injured by the Aſſembly of the National Church of Scotland, by the aſſertors of univerſal redemption, and by o-

thers, both here and in Britain, they would not have been ſo active in burying a Teſtimony for them. A careleſſneſs about the truths of the goſpel, and a general diſpoſition to prefer peace with their enemies, to an earneſt contending for them, belongs to the evil ſigns of our time. There is no end of ſchemes of reconciliation in the way of ſetting aſide ſubjects of controverſy, till nothing of Chriſtianity is left to contend about. We find one claſs attempting thus to reconcile differences in what they call circumſtantials, or leſſer matters; a ſecond, attempting to reconcile Calviniſts and Arminians; a third, laying their ſchemes ſo wide as to comprehend Papiſts, and every other ſect bearing the Chriſtian name; while a fourth, not content even with this, have actually attempted to reconcile Chriſtianity with Deiſm, with Mahometan deluſion, and with Jewiſh blaſphemy; by compoſing a form of worſhip, in which men of all theſe denominations may agree. Such a form was compoſed; and, for ſome years, uſed in a meeting at London, not long ago. This laſt appears to be modern catholiciſm carried to its perfection. When men give up truth to pleaſe its adverſaries, further conceſſions will be required, as long as any article of it remains. If it is ſaid by thoſe who make conceſſions in leſſer matters, That they are reſolved to hold faſt the truths eſſential to ſalvation; ſtill the queſtion recurs, What are theſe truths? for there is no one article of Chriſtianity which has not been either denied, or the belief of it deemed not eſſential to ſalvation, by ſome who profeſs to be Chriſtians. Daily experience ſhews us, that men who, for the ſake of an unhallowed peace, give up theſe truths, the acknowledgement and profeſſion of which they once reckoned neceſſary; do often proceed alſo to give up thoſe truths, the acknowledgement and profeſſion of which, they once reckoned eſſential to Chriſtianity.

It may not be improper to add here, an obſervation or two from Dr Owen. "Perhaps, (ſays he) ſome will ſug-
"geſt great things, of going a middle way in divinity be-
"tween diſſenters. But what is the iſſue, for the moſt
"part, of ſuch propoſals? After they have, by their
"middle ways, raiſed no leſs contention than was be-
"fore between the extremes, (yea, when things before
"were, in ſome good meaſure, allayed); the accommoda-
"tors themſelves, through an ambitious deſire to make
"good

" good and defend their own expedients, are inſenſibly " carried over to the party and extreme to which they " thought to make a condeſcenſion." After giving ſome inſtances of this, he adds, " I can freely ſay, that I know " not that man in England, who is willing to go further " in forbearance, love and communion, with all that fear " God, and hold the foundation, than I am; but this is to " be done upon other *grounds*, *principles*, and *ways*, by o- " ther *means* and *expedients*, than by *a condeſcenſion* from " the *exactneſs* of the leaſt *apex* of goſpel truth; or by an " *accommodation* of doctrines, by looſe and *general terms*. " Let no man deceive you with vain pretences: hold faſt " the truth as it is in Jeſus; part not with one *iota*, and " contend for it, when called thereunto.* "

CHAP. X.

Of the Conſtitution of the ASSOCIATE REFORMED SYNOD.

THE articles, by an agreement in which the union, deſcribed in the former chapter, was effected, were defective; and ſome of them ambiguous. But theſe ſoon gave way to what was ſtill more defective and ambiguous, *viz.* The conſtitution framed by a Synod of theſe united brethren, 1783. This laſt is one of the moſt dubious profeſſions of the faith we remember to have ſeen made by any Church. Almoſt every article of it is expreſſed in ſuch a manner, as it may be underſtood in different ſenſes; and we have reaſon to believe, that it was thus framed with that very deſign. Thus, the ſcheme of a coaleſcence with the Reformed Preſbytery, has led the brethren, who were lately in communion with us, to reject as wrong, or, at any rate, uſeleſs, all that the ſociety they had left had done for maintaining the truth of the goſpel, and for tranſmitting it pure to poſterity. If the *Aſſociate Reformed Synod*, as theſe brethren, and their new friends, ſtyle themſelves, proceed in the ſame courſe of Reformation as they have done ſince they took that deſignation to themſelves, who knows where they will end?

The adherence to the Weſtminſter Confeſſion, expreſſed in the conſtitution of this new Synod, is, to us, equally dubious as that expreſſed in the adopting act of the Synod of

* Preface to *Vindiciæ Evangelicæ*, p. 61.

New York and Philadelphia, which we have already conſidered. The profeſſion made by the firſt of theſe Synods, is, in no one reſpect, preferable to that of the laſt: And we cannot but conſider thoſe as more blamable, who go directly back from a profeſſion of the truth, which they had once made; than others, who never did acknowledge it in ſuch an explicit and ſolemn manner.

The faireſt conſtruction which can be put upon what this new Synod ſays, about the obligations they are under "to avoid unneceſſary criticiſms on the Weſtminſter Con-"feſſion," is, that the members of that Synod will judge themſelves bound to make no other criticiſms on that Confeſſion, than ſuch as any of them may judge neceſſary: and who knows what theſe may be? If they are perſuaded, that the whole doctrine of that Confeſſion is the doctrine of the word of God, and that no criticiſms upon it are neceſſary; it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that they would either have ſaid ſo, or ſaid nothing at all about *criticiſms*. We are all under the moſt ſacred obligations, to make no unneceſſary criticiſms on any good book which may come in our way; leſt, by ſo doing, we injure the truth contained in it. But, after all, we may find room for many neceſſary criticiſms on books of this character.

No well-ordered Church of Chriſt ever denied its members the privilege of communicating their ſcruples or objections, about any part of its profeſſion, to their brethren; or denied it to be a duty, to endeavour the removing of theſe objections, by calm diſpaſſionate reaſoning; or ever propoſed any other way of cenſuring members for their offences, than by firſt trying whether they were guilty. The propoſals of this new Synod about theſe matters, contain nothing but what Proteſtants generally acknowledge to be juſt; but two queſtions are left undetermined. The firſt is, Whether this Synod will bear with thoſe who perſiſt in objecting againſt the Weſtminſter Confeſſion? The ſecond is, if ſo, How far this forbearance is to extend? They ſpeak, indeed, about objections to any article or articles of that Confeſſion; but we have the charity for our brethren to believe, that they would not heſitate long about caſting out of their Society, theſe who would object to ſome articles of it.

All that is required of Miniſters, Elders and Deacons, belonging to this Society, at their ordination, as a profeſſion

ſeſſion of the principles of Chriſtianity, or as an evidence of their ſoundneſs in the faith, is; That they approve the principles exhibited in this conſtitution, and profeſs a reſolution "to adhere thereto, in oppoſition to all Deiſti-"cal, Popiſh, Arian, Socinian, Arminian, Neonomian, "and ſectarian errors, and all other opinions which are "contrary to ſound doctrine and the power of godlineſs." The utmoſt that can be learned from this, is, that, ſo far as their conſtitution and the Weſtminſter Confeſſion, with the neceſſary criticiſms which the members of that Synod may make upon it, are oppoſite to theſe errors, ſo far they will oppoſe them; but how far this may be, we know not. We know, that many, by the help of what they have thought a few neceſſary criticiſms on the Weſtminſter Confeſſion, have continued to profeſs an adherence to it; while they had gone far into errors, nearly allied to ſome of theſe mentioned, if not the very ſame with them. Farther, this new Synod has no where, in the declaration of its principles to the world, told us (though Elders and Deacons may, without any reflection on their qualifications, be ſuppoſed to need information) what theſe errors are; or what opinions deſerve to be accounted Deiſtical, Popiſh, Arian, *&c.* Concerning this, the profeſſed oppoſers of Deiſm, Popery, Arianiſm, and of the other ſyſtems of error mentioned, are far from being agreed. Many who profeſs an oppoſition to Popery, have gone, leſs or more directly, into the Popiſh doctrine concerning juſtification and faith. Others, who profeſs to oppoſe Arminianiſm, do, however, maintain this Arminian principle, "That Chriſt died, not for the elect "only, but for all mankind." At a time when truth and error are ſo much confounded, it is neceſſary to declare, not merely the deſignations of theſe heretics, whoſe opinions we teſtify againſt, but the opinions themſelves; that people, being warned, may watch againſt them, in whatever form, or by whatever denomination of men, they may be publiſhed.

It is a ſorry compliment this new Synod pays to our anceſtors, by ſaying, "That the Covenants they entered in-"to were well-intended engagements." This may be readily allowed by thoſe who hold them to have been unlawful engagements. This good intention is alſo ſaid to be the ſupport of "civil and religious liberty." And

si it ſo indeed, that our anceſtors had no farther view in theſe engagements, than what they might have had, though Pagans? for theſe laſt have a right to civil and religious liberty, and may be allowed to join themſelves in a covenant to preſerve both. Were not the preſervation, the increaſe, and the promoting of the kingdom of Chriſt; and the confirming, encouraging, and aſſiſting of one another in the good ways of the Lord, "that they, "and their poſterity after them, might, as brethren, "live in faith and love; and that the Lord might de- "light to dwell in the midſt of them," the declared ends? And were they not the chief ends our anceſtors had in view, when they entered into theſe engagements? Moſt certainly, unleſs we were to conſider them as agreeing, in the moſt awful manner a people ever did, to lie to God, and to deceive the world!

It is ſaid by this new Synod, "That it is their real in- "tention to carry with them all the judicial teſtimo- "nies againſt defection from the faith once delivered to the "ſaints, which have been emitted, in the preſent age, "by their brethren in Britain; as far as theſe teſtimonies "ſerve to diſplay the truth." We may ſuppoſe, that the Judicial Teſtimony of the Aſſociate Preſbytery, now the Aſſociate Synod of Edinburgh, is one of theſe here meant: but how far it ſerves to diſplay the truth, is not ſaid. That it diſplays it ſo far, cannot well be denied by any who profeſs to be Chriſtians. Our brethren, however, may adhere to the decrees of the Council of Trent, in the ſame form of words. Doubtleſs, our fathers, when they left the Church of Rome, carried with them the Teſtimony maintained by that Antichriſtian Church, ſo far as it ſerved to diſplay the truth: and it did ſerve to diſplay it ſo far; as it maintained the divine original of the ſcripture, the doctrine of the Trinity, and the immortality of the ſoul, againſt Pagans, Jews, Mahometans, and Arians.

This new Synod tell us, "That they will avail them- "ſelves of every call to bear a pointed teſtimony againſt "the errors and deluſions which prevail in this country." It is here acknowledged, that errors and deluſions prevail in this country; but the *pointed Teſtimony*, promiſed by our brethren, is not yet to be ſeen. Do they ſuppoſe, that no ſuch call, as that of which they ſpeak, is yet given

given them? If ſo, they may wait for it long enough. But as their words admit of different ſenſes, it may be they intend no more than this, that they will, in their ſermons, teſtify againſt prevailing evils. This will be ſo much, if they ſtudy to do it faithfully; but no more than what ſome, in the moſt degenerate of the Proteſtant Churches, are doing. It will, however, be no Teſtimony in the cauſe of Jeſus Chriſt by them as a Church. And, while they cannot agree in a joint Teſtimony, neither will they agree in their particular Teſtimonies: one will deſtroy what another builds. If they are of one mind about the matters that ſhould be the ſubject of their Teſtimony, why do they not openly, and with one voice, aſſert thoſe truths which are denied or perverted in *this adulterous and ſinful generation?*

This new Synod profeſs, That they are "bound to "honour the religious denominations in Britain to which "they formerly belonged, on account of their zeal for "the purity of the goſpel; and of their laudable endea-"vours to promote it, not only in Britain and Ireland, "but alſo in America." If the miſſions ſent to this country from the Aſſociate Synod, are here intended; they are in this, as in other things, inconſiſtent with themſelves. We deſire they would ſhew us, Whether, according to the profeſſion they now make, there ever was any reaſon for ſending miſſions to a place where there was a Church; whoſe profeſſion, whatever we may, on our principles, judge defective in it, they cannot, on theirs, deny to be as good as their own? If there be any difference between them and other Preſbyterians here, it would be reaſonable, firſt, to tell us what it is; and, next, to ſhew us, that it is a juſt cauſe of maintaining a diſtinct communion.

As to the miſſions of the Reformed Preſbytery, though we wiſh well to the people of that denomination, and eſteem whatever we ſee good in them; yet we much doubt, whether their attempts to increaſe their party, ought to be acknowledged, as flowing from zeal for the purity of the goſpel, and as laudable endeavours to promote it. Had they ſucceeded to the declared extent of their wiſhes, it would have been no deſirable event to us, and others, whom they accounted enemies to the Lord's work. If any one deſire to know, how they would in-

ſtruct

ſtruct their duly qualified Magiſtrate to deal with ſuch, he may conſult their Teſtimony.

What the Aſſociate Synod of Edinburgh have done to maintain a Teſtimony againſt the encroachments of the civil powers upon the kingdom of Chriſt; to prevent their people from ſwearing contradictory oaths; and to ſecure them from being led aſtray from their duty, as men and as Chriſtians, by very unjuſt and dangerous notions about civil government; is repreſented, by this new Synod, as nothing more than *local controverſies*, or *unneceſſary diſputes*. Theſe, they ſay, they will not ſuffer to be introduced into their Church. If they have a power to hinder theſe, or other controverſies, from entering into it, it is more than other Churches have. But truth and error, right and wrong, are the ſame every where. Does this new Synod now approve ſuch profeſſions of religion, as that eſtabliſhed by the civil powers in Scotland, which moſt of them once teſtified againſt, as, in various inſtances, amiſs or defective, yea or not? And what does it ſay about the duty of Chriſtians towards the civil powers under whom Providence may order their lot? Though this queſtion may, in the judgment of ſome, ſeem a very uſeleſs one, and fit only to produce unneceſſary diſputes; yet we know the Apoſtles Paul and Peter were of another mind: they took it under conſideration, and deſired all Chriſtians to do ſo.

According to the fifth article of this new Synod's conſtitution, a Miniſter is not to be excommunicated, and may not even be depoſed from his office, for any violations of the law of God, unleſs they are what the Synod judge notorious; nor for any errors, unleſs they are ſuch as the Synod judge, do unhinge the Chriſtian profeſſion. Seeing they evidently make a diſtinction, they ought to give us ſome direction how to apply it; by informing us, what is, and what is not to be called a notorious violation of the law of God; and likewiſe, what errors do, and what do not unhinge the Chriſtian profeſſion: for about theſe things, the profeſſors of Chriſtianity differ exceedingly. After all, What good end does an aſſembly of Miniſters, profeſſing to meet in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and to act by authority from him, propoſe, by telling men, naturally prone to vice and error, that they will not apply the higheſt cenſures he has appointed in his Church,

againſt

againſt thoſe who ſhall be guilty only of leſſer vices and leſſer errors?

They have, indeed, preſcribed a cenſure for what they reckon ſmall offences, which to us appears abundantly ſevere. It is a diſſolution of the connection between their Synod and the offender. We cannot diſtinguiſh between this and excommunication. What more can they do, in the caſe of any offender, than diſſolve the connection between their Synod and him? Excommunication, or putting one out of a Society for his offences, and diſſolving his connection with it for his offences, are ſo very like one another; that we would be obliged to theſe brethren if they would ſhew us the difference. And, if they judge there is any, we would next deſire to know what they mean by excommunication? and what ſcripture-authority they have for this other cenſure? And, if they plead none, what authority they have to add to the cenſures which the Lord Jeſus hath appointed in his Church, as if theſe were not ſufficient?

This new Synod, ſo far as we can underſtand the ſixth and ſeventh articles of their conſtitution, have one ſet of terms, on which they will admit people to what they call fixed communion; another ſet of terms, on which they will admit people to what they call occaſional communion: one door, by which a man may enter and ſtay with them; another, by which he may enter, if he is ſoon to go out again. This ſcheme of occaſional communion, we do abſolutely reject, as having no place in the word of God; and as being unknown in the Churches of Chriſt, till ſome, to avoid perſecution for the croſs of Chriſt, or to promote their worldly intereſt, deviſed it. It began to be frequently practiſed in England, by thoſe Diſſenters, who, during the reign of Charles the Second, and that of his brother, choſe to evade the penalty of ſome of the perſecuting laws; by communicating ſometimes with the Eſtabliſhed Church, rather than to ſuffer affliction with their brethren. And after the perſecution was over, ſome of them practiſed the ſame expedient; that they might, according to the laws of that kingdom, be qualified for places of public truſt. Theſe ends were too ſelfiſh to be plainly avowed: catholic love was pretended; and others, who had no ſuch ſiniſter ends, were drawn into the ſnare. Ever ſince, the ſcheme has had many advocates,

vocates, both in Britain and America. But it carries in it a manifeſt inconſiſtency. If we may enter into Church-fellowſhip with any particular ſociety, or deſcription of men, for one day; why not (ſuppoſing they continue the ſame) the next, a third, and ſo on, to the end of our lives?

The laſt article of this new Synod's conſtitution, in which they profeſs to be extremely tender of encroaching on the congregations of other Preſbyterians, may ſerve to impreſs people with a favourable apprehenſion of their candour; but we very well know, that one of their Preſbyteries, whoſe proceedings we have beſt acceſs to know, do not make it the rule of their conduct towards the few congregations belonging to us. If they think a detail of the facts on which this charge is founded, will do them any credit, it may be given.

Theſe remarks upon the CONSTITUTION of the ASSOCIATE REFORMED SYNOD, we judge neceſſary, as a warning againſt that *Latitudinarian ſcheme* which it is calculated to promote; and, as a vindication of the conduct of this Preſbytery, in refuſing to agree to that union which produced it. Upon the whole, it is abſurd for any to allege, that the brethren who left us, ſtand on the ſame ground they formerly did. With their private ſentiments, or their hearts, we have no buſineſs; but their profeſſion we do aſſuredly know to be not the ſame which it was while they were connected with us. They either were then, or are now, in a wrong courſe.

CHAP. XI.

Reaſons why the Aſſociate Preſbytery of Pennſylvania have ſtated their Principles in the Manner they have now done.

THE neceſſity of ſtating the Teſtimony which we maintain, in ſuch a manner as may, in this part of the world, beſt anſwer the ends deſigned by it, has been long acknowledged. The brethren who left us know that we were willing to join with them in accompliſhing this: It was propoſed and agreed to by the Aſſociate Preſbytery of Pennſylvania in 1776. It could not, however, be quickly effected, in the confuſions of that time: and, after

after the ſcheme of uniting with the Reformed Preſbytery was ſet on foot; thoſe who favoured this laſt, gave themſelves no farther concern about executing a meaſure, which would have ſerved to inſtruct and eſtabliſh the people adhering to us, in their profeſſion.

What was neceſſary formerly, we find ſtill more ſo now. Our principles have been induſtriouſly miſrepreſented; and the JUDICIAL TESTIMONY, the ACT CONCERNING THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE, and other proceedings of the Aſſociate Preſbytery, now the ASSOCIATE SYNOD, being in the hands of few, and being alſo, through many references in them to affairs well known in Britain, but not ſo here, leſs plain to the people of this country; ſuch miſrepreſentations have ſucceeded in leading numbers, who once profeſſed adherence to the cauſe in which we are engaged, into a very oppoſite courſe.

When the Seceſſion was firſt made from the Eſtabliſhed Church of Scotland; the ſcattering of the flock of Chriſt, by the intruſion of hirelings upon it;—the tyranny of the Eccleſiaſtical Courts, towards thoſe who ſtudied faithfulneſs in teſtifying againſt the prevailing apoſtaſy of the time;—and the ſubmiſſion of theſe Courts to grievous encroachments of the civil powers; were juſtly conſidered as leading evils, and were therefore largely inſiſted upon in the Judicial Teſtimony, agreed upon by the Aſſociate Preſbytery, 1736. The occaſion of theſe evils, *viz.* a civil eſtabliſhment of religion, not exiſting here, we have not a call to ſay ſo much concerning them. We do, however, moſt readily concur with our brethren in Britain and Ireland, in teſtifying for the rights and privileges of the Church of Chriſt, againſt every ſort of oppoſition.

But theſe evils were not the greateſt of thoſe which gave riſe to the Seceſſion. In the Eſtabliſhed Church of Scotland, the truth was condemned; damnable hereſies were not properly cenſured; grievous errors were conſidered as deſerving no reproof; and, from the admiſſion of ſo many hirelings to the miniſtry, together with the negligence of the Judicatories, in not caſting out the ſcandalous; an impure communion neceſſarily followed. The Aſſociate Preſbytery judged it neceſſary to give ſeveral inſtances, in which it appeared that theſe evils were juſtly chargeable upon the Judicatories of the Eſtabliſhed Church: it was neceſſary alſo, in their circumſtances, that the proof ſhould be

be full and particular. They were not without hope of being, in ſome degree, uſeful to reclaim the miniſters and people of that Church, from their backſlidings; and their hope was not altogether in vain. Though the ringleaders in apoſtaſy, and, with them, the majority went on in the ſame pernicious courſes as before; yet a very conſiderable number gathered to the ſtandard lifted up for the truth.

The evils laſt mentioned have, for many years paſt, ſpread and increaſed in the Proteſtant Churches; and he who ſees them not in America, is ſo far unable to *diſcern the ſigns of our time.* The oppoſition to the cauſe and teſtimony of our Lord Jeſus is the ſame here as in Scotland; only it aſſumes a different form, according as the leaders in it, taking every advantage from the circumſtances of time and place, judge moſt effectual for promoting their own ends. The Teſtimony, we and our brethren in Scotland maintain, is the ſame; and the great deſign of it, is the preſervation of the doctrine taught in the word of God. We regard CONFESSIONS, TESTIMONIES and COVENANTS of former or preſent times, only as ſubſervient to that deſign.

We have been, and expect to be, reproached as narrow-minded and uncharitable. But this ought not to ſeem ſtrange to us, or to move us from our duty. The way the Lord approves, is ſcarcely ever faſhionable; and thoſe who walk in it, are, ſo far as they are known to the world, by an open profeſſion of the truth, a party *every where ſpoken againſt.* We are not conſcious of being narrow-minded, while we approve all that we can ſee good in any; nor of being uncharitable, while we regard all thoſe as true Chriſtians, who truſt in the Lord Jeſus alone for ſalvation, as he is *made of God unto us wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption;* and who manifeſt the truth of their faith, by a converſation becoming the goſpel. In refuſing to enter into Church-fellowſhip with ſuch of them as hold principles we cannot approve, or oppoſe what we believe to be duty, we cannot ſee that we act uncharitably towards them. An oppoſite conduct would confirm them in what is wrong, and hurt us; ſeeing, in the preſent ſtate of things, it would be conſidered as an evidence, that we were gone into the prevailing indifference of the age, eſteeming all theſe truths, which

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are ſubjects of controverſy among Chriſtians, circumſtantial or ſmall matters, not worth contending for; an opinion which we judge contrary to the word of God, and exceedingly pernicious to his Church. To do any thing which implies a diſregard to the truth, is not the way to bring others to a proper acknowledgment of it. To give countenance to corruptions, is not the way to remove them.

Whatever expectations have been expreſſed by ſome who do not wiſh well to the cauſe in which we are engaged, that it would come to nothing in this part of the world; and whatever ſuch have done to place it in a contemptible light: yet, perſuaded that it is the cauſe of truth, we are not afraid or aſhamed to appear in it. If it were to fall, better to fall with it, than to riſe upon its ruins. They have much to anſwer for, who, by their deſerting and miſrepreſenting it, have brought it ſo low.

We have in this Narrative, and in the Teſtimony which follows it, ſtudied, according to the ſolemn engagements we are under, to diſcharge our duty in maintaining *that Banner* the Lord *has given to be diſplayed because of the Truth.* In this courſe, we deſire to perſevere; depending on the Redeemer and Head of the Church, *who giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, increaſeth ſtrength*; and from whom alone is all the ſucceſs, which attends the labours of any in the ſervice of the goſpel. May his *kingdom come*, and the promiſe be further accompliſhed; *that from the riſing of the ſun, even unto the going down of the ſame, his name* ſhould *be great among the* GENTILES! AMEN.

ACT *of the* ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY *approving the* DECLARATION *and* TESTIMONY.

Piquea, Auguſt 25. 1784.

THE ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY of PENNSYLVANIA, having found it neceſſary to ſtate the TESTIMONY they maintain, for the DOCTRINE and ORDER of the Church of Chriſt, in ſuch a manner as would render it more plain to people in this country, better adapted to the circumſtances in which they are placed, and more directly pointed againſt the errors of the preſent time; did, in *May* laſt, enter upon that work. And having had ſeveral meetings for prayer and conference upon the ſubject, in the courſe of this Summer, a draught of this work was preſented; which having been conſidered at ſeveral meetings, was at laſt finiſhed. On this and the preceding day it was carefully read by paragraphs; then, the queſtion being put, *Approve of the* DECLARATION *and* TESTIMONY *for the* DOCTRINE *and* ORDER *of the Church of Chriſt or not?* it was carried *unanimouſly* APPROVE: Wherefore the Preſbytery did, and hereby do, judicially APPROVE this DECLARATION and TESTIMONY, as containing their views of *preſent Truth* and *Duty*; and as a *Confeſſion* of that faith to which, through the grace of the Lord Jeſus, they are reſolved to adhere.

This by order of PRESBYTERY, is ſigned,

WILLIAM MARSHALL, *Moderator.*

Extracted by JOHN ANDERSON, *Preſb. Clk.*

DECLARATION AND TESTIMONY for the Doctrine and Order of the CHURCH of CHRIST; and againſt the Errors of the preſent Times.

PART FIRST.

Concerning GOD's *goodneſs to his Church, and the Teſtimony for Truth maintained by her.*

I. *ONE generation ſhall praiſe the works of the* LORD *to another, and ſhall declare his mighty acts* *; *the fathers to the children ſhall make known his truth* †. Inſtructed in our duty, and encouraged to ſtudy a faithful performance of it, by theſe and other like precious promiſes of the great Head of the Church, we publiſh to the world this TESTIMONY and DECLARATION of our principles; in which our deſign is, *firſt*, to expreſs our thankful remembrance of what the Lord hath done for his Church in former times, eſpecially what he hath done for that particular Church with which we are moſt immediately connected; and concerning which we may ſay, *O God we have heard with our ears; our fathers have told us the works thou didſt in their days, in the times of old* ‡. *Secondly*, To declare our adherence to the *Teſtimony* maintained for the truth of the goſpel, by the Churches of the Reformation, in their Confeſſions of Faith; eſpecially to the *Teſtimony* maintained by that particular Church with which we are moſt immediately connected, in its beſt and pureſt times. This adherence is not, however, an implicit aſſent to all that any church has ſaid or done; it is not to be conſidered as extending beyond what we do in our Teſtimony aſſert. *Thirdly*, To vindicate the truths expreſſed in our Confeſſion of Faith; particularly, in thoſe articles of it which have been perverted, and of which the plain and genuine ſenſe has been denied by ſome who profeſs to receive it as the Confeſſion of their Faith.

II. We being, therefore, authoriſed by the commandment of God, encouraged by his promiſe, and moved, we truſt, with ſome degree of zeal for the glory of his Name; to make this joint, open, and expreſs acknowledgment of

* Pſal. cxlv. 4. † Iſa. xxxviii. 19. ‡ Pſal. xliv. 1.

the truth revealed in his Word, and of the loving kindneſs manifeſted in his Providence towards the Church, in oppoſition to thoſe who contemn or deny the one or the other.

III. We deſire to celebrate the mercy of the Lord, in that he remembered us in our fallen wretched ſtate; and gave to our firſt parents, after they had ſinned, a promiſe of grace and ſalvation, in the intimation made to them of a Redeemer, who ſhould *deſtroy the works of the devil*, and reſcue a choſen ſeed from the bondage in which that adverſary held them. In this firſt goſpel-promiſe the *day dawned*, and in the further revelations made, during the Old Teſtament diſpenſation, the light increaſed; till CHRIST *the Sun of Righteouſneſs aroſe with healing in his wings.*

IV. We do, therefore, teſtify againſt thoſe who affirm, that the immortality of the ſoul and an eternal ſtate were not made known in the Old Teſtament ſcriptures; and that the people of God had, in theſe times, no other promiſes than ſuch as belonged to the preſent life. The teachers of theſe errors too plainly follow the Sadducees, in their opinion of the Old Teſtament ſcriptures; and, though bearing the Chriſtian name, do arrogantly preſume that they are better able to interpret the ſacred oracles than our Lord Jeſus, who confuted the Sadducees, and proved the doctrine of another ſtate after death, from the books of Moſes, the firſt of the inſpired writers.

V. We deſire to celebrate the mercy of the Lord in making the *day-ſpring from on high viſit* the Gentile nations, giving *light to them who ſat in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death*; thus accompliſhing what he had long before ſpoken by the mouth of his ſervants the prophets *concerning the gathering of many nations* to Chriſt. *God the Lord hath ſhewed us light! Let us render to him the ſacrifice of thankſgiving* *.

VI. We teſtify againſt all who make light of this merciful viſitation; either by aſcribing the rapid progreſs of chriſtianity after our Lord's aſcenſion, to the political abilities, or to the eloquence of thoſe employed in ſpreading it, denying that diſplay of Almighty power and grace, whereby the nations, till then ſlaves of Satan, were moved to yield a willing ſubjection to the Lord Jeſus; or by alleging that though chriſtianity be a bleſſing, yet men

* Pſal. cxviii. 27.

men may be ſaved who know nothing about it, if they are diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the laws of that religion which they profeſs.

VII. We do acknowledge the goodneſs of God in preſerving his Church in the worſt of times; particularly under the long, the dark, and the dreadful night of antichriſt's reign. *He gave power*, that is, authority, zeal and ability *to his Witneſſes*, though few in number, and beſet with ſubtle and furious enemies, to teſtify for his truth againſt the horrible errors and abominations of that *ſynagogue of Satan*, called by men the Church of Rome, but called by the Holy Spirit in New Teſtament prophecies, "*the Great Whore drunk with the blood of the* "*ſaints*;" "*the Mother of Harlots and abominations of* "*the earth*;" "*a Myſtery of Iniquity*;" and which the Holy Spirit further deſcribes by the names of SODOM, EGYPT, and BABYLON, ſignifying that impurity of life, heaven-daring pride, and extreme cruelty towards the people of God, would be its diſtinguiſhing characters.

VIII. We adhere to the Teſtimony maintained by theſe Witneſſes: 1. For the doctrine of ſalvation by free grace through Jeſus Chriſt, in oppoſition to the antichriſtian doctrine of ſalvation being partly merited by our works. 2. For this truth, That the traditions of men ought, in every caſe, to give place to the word of God. His word is the only rule by which all doctrines are to be tried, and according to which all things in the Church are to be regulated.

IX. We are bound to remember and acknowledge, with thankſgiving, the works of the Lord, the right hand of the Moſt High in the Reformation; by which our fathers were delivered from the darkneſs, the ſuperſtition, and the deadly errors of the Romiſh Antichriſt. What was the duty of Iſrael, is our duty, *to keep in mind the multitude of the Lord's mercies*, how he delivered our fathers from a worſe than Egyptian bondage, reſtoring to them that light of the goſpel, which, through the fraud and tyranny of Antichriſt, had long been hid as under a buſhel; and by them tranſmitting to us the knowledge of the truth, liberty to profeſs it, and many valuable privileges which we at this preſent time enjoy. *This was the doing of the Lord*, and ſhould be *marvellous in our eyes*, as the moſt remarkable deliverance wrought for the Church ſince the

days of the Apoſtles. Though this deliverance was effected in a way leſs miraculous than that by which the Lord brought his ancient people out of the land of Egypt, out of the houſe of bondage; yet it was not leſs gracious, not leſs the work of God, and not leſs worthy of admiration and praiſe.

X. We cannot, therefore, but teſtify againſt thoſe who refuſe to acknowledge any other hand than that of men in this great event. Who diſpoſed the minds of men in different places to concur in attempting a reformation? Who led them forward to it, while frequently they took one ſtep without knowing what ſhould be the next? Who made the learning, the politics, and even the confuſions of the times, favour its progreſs? Who but *He who ruleth in heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, God our king from the beginning, working ſalvation in the midſt of the earth? He looked down from the height of his ſanctuary: from heaven did the Lord behold the earth, to hear the groaning of the priſoners, to ſet them free whom* the man of ſin *had appointed to death* *, that they might declare his name and his praiſe in the Church.

XI. We adhere to that expreſs and glorious Teſtimony for the doctrine of ſalvation by free grace through Jeſus Chriſt, which the reformed Churches did then ſo zealouſly maintain; and for which the Witneſſes of Jeſus, in theſe times, did many of them ſuffer unto death. This doctrine we believe to be of God, plainly taught in his Word, and are fully perſuaded that he never did, nor ever will bleſs any oppoſite doctrine in his Church. By no other doctrine has any church been reformed, or the power of godlineſs made to revive and flouriſh; and Chriſtians carried triumphantly through trials of mocking, ſcourging, impriſonment and death, for the name of Jeſus.

XII. The apoſtaſy of many in the reformed Churches from this doctrine, and the negligence of others in not contending earneſtly for it, we teſtify againſt, and deſire to lament as grievous ſins, becauſe of which the Lord is, in many inſtances, leaving men to walk in their own ways, and after the imagination of their own hearts; ſo that they go from evil to worſe, denying the leading articles of

* Pſal. cii. 19, 20.

of revealed truth one after another, till many of them do plainly avow their entire rejection of the Chriſtian Faith.

XIII. Farther, we adhere to the Teſtimony maintained at the Reformation for this truth; That the worſhip, government and diſcipline of the Church of Chriſt is to be learned from his Word, not from the traditions or commandments of men. The rubbiſh of ages could not, indeed, be all removed in one day. If the circumſtances of the times, particularly the ignorance of the common people who had been brought up in darkneſs, the falſe policy of ſome of the civil powers, and the imperfect views of the reformers, who, like other men, had to learn one thing after another, hindered the Reformation from being carried to ſuch perfection as it might otherwiſe have been; it does not follow, that we ought to copy the blemiſhes of the firſt Proteſtant Churches. They are no friends to the Reformation, who have laboured to ſtop its progreſs; much leſs are they friends to it who have rejected the doctrine of ſalvation by free grace, ſo purely taught, and ſo eminently bleſſed in the Churches at the Reformation; and have earneſtly contended, even to the perſecuting of their brethren, for that Antichriſtian form of Church-government, and thoſe ſuperſtitions which the firſt reformers in ſome churches were not able to remove. Such is the character which many of the advocates for the Epiſcopal Church of England juſtly deſerve. The Reformation was very imperfect in that kingdom; the lordly dominion of biſhops, and a number of popiſh ceremonies were not taken away; which evils have ſince proved a ſnare, and, while they continue, will do ſo, to the churches in Britain: Attachments to theſe remains of Antichriſtianiſm, being like that of Iſrael to the high places; the more ſinful, the more plainly and fully the Lord has teſtified againſt it.

XIV. We declare our adherence to the whole doctrine contained in the Confeſſion of Faith and Catechiſms agreed upon by the Aſſembly of Divines at Weſtminſter, with Commiſſioners from the Church of Scotland, and received by that Church. And we being a branch of that Church, and ſtill having an immediate connection with our brethren in that country, (the miniſters and people belonging to the Aſſociate Synod) do join with them in the Teſtimony they maintain for the doctrine expreſſed in the

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ſaid Confeſſion and Catechiſms; for the divine right of preſbyterial Church-government; for the ſpiritual privileges of the Church, particularly this, That it is not bound to acknowledge any other head than Chriſt, or any other law than his; for the warrantableneſs and perpetual obligation of the Covenant-engagements, which the Church of Scotland came under, to abide by the principles of the Reformation. And likewiſe we join with them in adhering to the teſtimonies of thoſe, who, during former times of apoſtaſy, and during the perſecutions which have formerly raged in Scotland, witneſſed and ſuffered for the truth; ſo far as theſe teſtimonies had the maintenance of the principles of the Reformation, which we profeſs, for their leading deſign.

XV. We judge it neceſſary, however, in profeſſing our adherence to the Weſtminſter Confeſſion, to declare, as our brethren in Scotland have done, our mind concerning the power of the civil Magiſtrate in matters of religion, more particularly than that Confeſſion does.

We do, therefore, aſſert, that, as the kingdom of Chriſt is ſpiritual, acknowledging no other laws and no other rulers than he has appointed in it, (a truth plainly and fully declared in the Weſtminſter Confeſſion) ſo the civil Magiſtrate has nothing to do with it as a Magiſtrate. As a member of the Chriſtian Church, he is bound to improve every opportunity which his high ſtation and extenſive influence may give him for promoting the faith of Chriſt, for oppoſing the enemies of this faith, for ſupporting and encouraging true godlineſs, and for diſcouraging whatever, in principle or practice, is contrary to it. But to accompliſh theſe ends, it is not warrantable for him to uſe any kind of violence towards either the life, the property, or the conſcience of men. He ought not to puniſh any as heretics or ſchiſmatics; nor ought he to grant any privileges to thoſe he judges profeſſors of the true religion, which may hurt others in their natural rights. His whole duty as a Magiſtrate reſpects men, not as Chriſtians but as members of civil ſociety. The appointed means for promoting the kingdom of Chriſt are all of a ſpiritual nature: *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but ſpiritual and mighty*; not through the force of human laws compelling men to that which they diſlike, but *through God*,

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by his almighty power and grace, making the obſtinate and rebellious yield a cheerful ſubmiſſion to him.

XVI. If any article in our Confeſſion of Faith ſeems to give any other power to the civil Magiſtrate, in matters of religion, than what we have now declared to be competent to him; we are to be conſidered as receiving it, only in ſo far as it agrees with other articles of the ſame Confeſſion, in which the ſpiritual nature of the Church is aſſerted, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven denied to belong to the civil Magiſtrate, and in ſo far as it agrees with this Declaration of our principles.

XVII. To worſhip God after that way and manner they judge moſt agreeable to his will, is a right common to all men. They may, and often do err and offend the Moſt High, by ſubſtituting a falſe worſhip in place of that which he requires; but no power on earth may take their right from them. Yet this right cannot be pleaded in behalf of principles or practices deſtructive to civil ſociety: therefore the civil Magiſtrate does not go beyond the limits preſcribed to him, when he lays under reſtraint thoſe who teach that it is their duty to deſtroy the lives of ſuch as they judge heretics; that they are not obliged to fulfil promiſes made to perſons whom they conſider in that light; and that they may lawfully break their oaths, if they obtain a diſpenſation for this purpoſe from the Pope of Rome. The ſafety of ſociety renders it neceſſary to guard againſt perſons of this deſcription, not becauſe they are of a falſe religion, but becauſe they are enemies to the rights of mankind, and would uſe their liberty to deſtroy that of other people. Thus, the Magiſtrate, in diſcharging his duty to civil ſociety, is often the inſtrument, in the hand of God, for protecting the Church from the fury of perſecuting enemies.

XVIII. The civil Magiſtrate not only may, but ought to reſtrain thoſe vices which are deſtructive to civil ſociety, and for which none can plead as what they are bound in conſcience to practiſe, ſeeing the light of nature teſtifies againſt them. He ought to be *a terror to evil doers, and a praiſe to them who do well.* Thus, the proper exerciſe of his office, is, in its conſequences, beneficial to the Church.

XIX. It is the duty of Chriſtians, plainly and frequently enjoined upon them in the word of God, and acknowledged

knowledged in the Confeſſions of all the Reformed Churches, to ſubmit to the government of that country in which Providence has ordered their lot. The civil Magiſtrate being an infidel, or, of what we judge a falſe religion, does not, as our Confeſſion moſt juſtly declares, free us from an obligation to acknowledge his authority, and to obey him in all lawful commands. Civil ſocieties may, and ought to preſerve their rights and liberties; and to them it belongs to ſet up theſe forms of government, and thoſe Magiſtrates whom they judge moſt proper. It is a ſad truth, that, in doing ſo, nations frequently neglect to acknowledge God, and give things injurious to religion a place in their civil conſtitutions. Againſt theſe evils, Chriſtians ought to teſtify, as the Lord gives them opportunity. But they ought, by no means, on account of ſuch blemiſhes in any government, eſtabliſhed by the conſent of a nation, to refuſe ſubmiſſion to it in all lawful commands, eſpecially while it grants the ſame protection to them as to the other members of the community.

XX. As we acknowledge that it was not only lawful, but highly expedient for the Church of Scotland, to enter into the moſt ſolemn engagements, as ſhe did in the NATIONAL COVENANT, and in the SOLEMN LEAGUE and COVENANT of the three nations, to abide by the doctrine taught, and the order eſtabliſhed in that Church; to ſtudy the preſervation of the Reformed Religion, the removing of thoſe corruptions and diſorders which hindered its progreſs, and the uniting of its friends in the ſame profeſſion of the faith; and to ſtudy that purity of life and converſation which becometh the goſpel; ſo we acknowledge theſe engagements are ſtill binding on us: Not that we judge every thing, in the manner of covenanting uſed by the Church of Scotland in former times, a proper example for us to follow; or that we judge the form of words they uſed, ſtill binding as an oath upon us. As to what may be called the civil part of theſe Covenants, it is what we neither have, nor ever had any thing to do with. Nothing of that kind has a place in the Bond which our brethren in Scotland uſe in covenanting. They judged it improper to mix civil and religious matters in ſuch Covenants, and we are of the ſame mind with them.

XXI. But that we may not be chargeable with deceiving, either the world or one another, by a general profeſſion

profeſſion of adherence to theſe engagements of our anceſtors, not explained; 1. We do more particularly declare, that, as our anceſtors engaged to hold faſt and defend the doctrine received by them, and by the other Churches of the Reformation, againſt thoſe who were, at that time, its moſt remarkable enemies in Britain, *viz.* the Papiſts, and others, whoſe zeal for Epiſcopal power and for ſuperſtitious ceremonies, together with their perſecuting ſpirit, made them to be juſtly conſidered as enemies to the Reformation; ſo the ſame engagements lie on us to hold faſt and defend the ſame truth, againſt all who do now, or afterward may oppoſe it, in that part of the world where we live.

2. We declare, that, as our anceſtors engaged to ſtudy the preſervation, the purity and the increaſe of the Church of Chriſt in Britain; ſo the ſame engagements lie on us, to ſtudy the preſervation, the purity and the increaſe of the Church of Chriſt, in the United States of North America, or wherever Providence may order our lot.

3. We declare, that, as our anceſtors engaged to aſſiſt each other in maintaining the cauſe of Chriſt againſt its adverſaries, to ſtudy perſonal reformation, and to perform the duties incumbent on them, as members of civil ſociety, towards ſuperiors, inferiors, or equals; ſo the ſame engagements lie on us, to walk, in all theſe reſpects, worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.

4. Finally, We declare, that it is our duty, relying on the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus, to engage jointly in a public ſolemn Covenant, as our anceſtors did, to endeavour a faithful performance of theſe, and all other duties which the word of God requires; eſpecially of thoſe duties which are moſt oppoſed, and the performance of which Church-members are moſt apt to neglect, or, through fear of reproach, and hurt to their worldly intereſt, to be deterred from.

XXII. Our brethren in Scotland juſtly reckoned it an abſurdity to ſwear theſe Covenants, as framed in a former period of the Church, and full of references to perſons and circumſtances which do not now exiſt. They renewed them in a Bond, ſuited to the time and ſituation in which they were placed. In doing ſo, they followed the example of the Church of Scotland in the times of its greateſt purity. The National Covenant had been ſeveral

ral times renewed, but always in a Bond ſuited to the circumſtances of the Church, and to the mercies and judgments paſſing over it at the particular time when ſuch engagements were entered into; but the matter and deſign being ſtill the ſame in the chief articles of all theſe Bonds, each of them was very properly called a renewing of the firſt ſolemn Covenant of the Reformed Church of Scotland.

XXIII. The engagements which are binding on a Church, are binding on all the members of it. The circumſtance of their being gathered out of different nations, can make no difference. Whatever was the duty of Chriſtians in Britain, is the duty of Chriſtians all over the world, whenever the Lord calls them to it, and gives them an opportunity to perform it. No Church can make that a duty, by engaging in ſolemn Covenant to do it, which was not a duty before. We muſt not add to what the Lord has commanded; nor is the uttermoſt of what we can do in ſerving him, more than is required of us. Thus, our Covenant-engagements, as already ſtated, being nothing more than what the Lord requires of every one, and nothing more than what all who confeſs the name of Jeſus in ſincerity and truth, do materially acknowledge to be duty; ſo every one, of whatever nation he be, who joins himſelf to that particular Church which owns them as binding upon it, comes under the ſame engagements with his brethren, though he may not have had an opportunity of declaring this in public covenanting.

PART SECOND.

Concerning the Doctrine of the Church of Chriſt.

WE would not think it neceſſary to add any thing concerning the doctrines taught in our Confeſſion of Faith, were it not that many of theſe doctrines are perverted or denied by ſome who profeſs to receive it as the Confeſſion of their faith. It is, therefore, our duty to bear teſtimony for the truth againſt theſe and other enemies with whom they join in oppoſing it.

ARTICLE I. *Of the neceſſity of the Scripture Revelation.*

WE declare, that we receive the holy ſcriptures not merely as a ſufficient rule, but as the *only* rule of faith and obedience. There is no other revelation made, either by the light of nature, or by an univerſal tradition, from which men may learn, that God will be gracious to ſinners; will forgive their tranſgreſſions, and receive them into his favour. The entrance, the evil, and the extent of ſin, and the only propitiation by which it is taken away, are all unknown where the ſcripture revelation is unknown. There is no ſalvation in any other than our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and he *is the Saviour of his body the Church;* not of thoſe who live in heathen darkneſs, or who rebel againſt the light of his word. The Lord either ſends the goſpel to thoſe whom he hath appointed to ſalvation, or he brings them to ſome place where it is made known. The heathen are deſcribed by the Spirit of truth, as *ſitting in the ſhadow of death*, as *led captive by Satan working in their hearts*, as *children of diſobedience*; and therefore, without exception, *children of wrath.*

II. The light of nature, together with the works of creation and providence, does, however, ſo far manifeſt the power, wiſdom, and goodneſs of God, as to render the heathen inexcuſable. Impreſſions of the divine law ſtill remain on their hearts. Their conſciences do, in ſome degree, bear witneſs, that there is a Judge higher than any on earth, by whom their actions are tried: And the viſible works of God do manifeſt to their minds his perfections inviſible to the bodily eye, *even his eternal power and godhead: ſo that they are without excuſe*, becauſe they do not improve the knowledge of God which they have, in glorifying him as the Creator, Governor and Judge of the univerſe; are not thankful for what of his goodneſs is diſplayed to them; go into fooliſh imaginations, quite contrary to the light given them; do thoſe things which their own conſcience declares to be evil; and *change the truth of God into a lie, worſhipping and ſerving the creature rather than the Creator*: the object of their fear, eſteem, and adoration being dumb idols, things inanimate, departed ſpirits or devils; not Jehovah, the only living and true God. Becauſe they do not give glory to God according to the knowledge they have of

his great and holy name, he juſtly leaves them to proceed from one degree of idolatry and wickedneſs to another; ſo that they become exceeding vile in their lives, and exceeding mad in their ſuperſtitions.

III. We do, therefore, reject the opinion of thoſe who teach, that all knowledge of the Supreme Being, to be found in the world, is learned from the revelation of grace made to man ſince the fall; and that ſo much of this knowledge as we find among thoſe who have not the written word, has been communicated to them, and preſerved among them by tradition only. This opinion is contrary to the ſcripture, and is deſigned to prepare the way for other and greater errors; as, *firſt*, That there is a revelation made to all, though more obſcurely to ſome. *Secondly*, That the revelation of grace being univerſal, all of every claſs, Mahometan or Heathen, will be ſaved, who ſtudy to frame their lives according to the light they have; though they never ſaw or heard of the written revelation we have, and know nothing about our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. And, *thirdly*, as a conſequence of theſe two errors, That it is mens improvement of the means they enjoy, not the free grace of God manifeſted in Chriſt Jeſus, which makes the difference between thoſe who are ſaved, and thoſe who periſh.

That the heathen may be ſaved, by living according to the light they have, we do reject as an opinion directly oppoſite to the ſcripture; which aſſures us, that *by the deeds of the law ſhall no fleſh, no one* of the human race, Jew or Gentile, without or within the Church, *be juſtified in the ſight of God;* and as an opinion which proceeds upon a ſuppoſition of that being true, which the ſcripture aſſures us is abſolutely falſe: For no one of the heathen ever did, and, by reaſon of the entire depravity of nature, which is common to all, no one of them ever can live according to the light he has, or obey the law of God, ſo far as he knows it. The Lord, beholding from heaven the children of men, declares, that *they are all gone aſide; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doth good, no not one* *.

ARTICLE II. *Of the Trinity.*

I. AS we adhere to the doctrine expreſſed in our Confeſſion of Faith concerning the Trinity; we do reject all contrary

* Pſal. xiv. 2, 3.

contrary opinions; particularly, the error of thoſe who deny that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is neceſſarily exiſtent; which is the ſame as to deny, that he is equal with the Father, and one with the Father, *God over all, bleſſed for ever.* The works done by our Redeemer ſhew him to be the Supreme Jehovah: *By him all things were made, and without him was not any thing made, which was made* *. *He* ſpeaks, *and it is done*; *he* commands, *and it ſtands faſt*, —the ſole prerogative of the Moſt High. He raiſeth the dead; which he could not do, if he were not *God omnipotent.* He will judge the world in righteouſneſs; which he could not do, if he were not *God omniſcient*, knowing all things which have been thought, ſaid, or acted in the world, from Adam to the laſt of his poſterity.

II. A ſtedfaſt belief of this truth, that our Redeemer is God, infinite in all divine perfections, is abſolutely neceſſary to that confidence in him, and love to him, which the ſcriptures require of us: We are commanded *to honour him, as we honour the Father* †; which, compared with that other commandment, *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve* ‡, plainly ſhews us, that he is both a diſtinct Perſon from the Father, and one in eſſence or being with the Father, the object of the ſame love, adoration and praiſe. If we know the depth of that miſery into which we have fallen, and the greatneſs of that ſalvation which we need, we will acknowledge, that none but an Almighty Redeemer can ſave us. If Jehovah the eternal God is not our help, we muſt periſh in our ſins.

III. We believe our Redeemer to be the Son of God by eternal generation; and reject the opinion of thoſe who, denying this, teach, That he is ſo called, either on account of the relation he, as the Head of the redeemed, ſtands in to the firſt Perſon of the Trinity, or on account of his aſſumption of human nature. The ſcriptures teach, that *God ſent his Son to redeem us*; plainly intimating, that the Redeemer was the Son of God, abſtract from the conſideration of his undertaking as a Surety for us, or of his entering upon his mediatory work. His miſſion ſuppoſes his Sonſhip; his Sonſhip does not ariſe from his miſſion. *And in this was manifeſted the love of God towards us, becauſe that God ſent his only begotten Son into*

* John i. 3. † John v. 2, 3. ‡ Matt. iv. 10

*the world, that we might live through him**. *He ſpared not his own Son,* (his Son in a ſenſe abſolutely different from that in which any other is ſo) *but gave him up for us all* †.

IV. We do alſo believe that the holy Spirit is God equal with the Father and the Son, and one with them; becauſe the ſcriptures of truth teach us, that he gives thoſe gifts which none but God can give; does thoſe works which none but God can do; ſearcheth the heart, and has that perfect knowledge of it, which none but God can have; is every where preſent, which none but God can be; and is the object of that worſhip which is due to God, and to none elſe. And we do reject the error of thoſe who deny him to be a diſtinct perſon from the Father and the Son; together with all opinions contrary to that revealed truth, *There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt; and theſe three are one* ‡.

V. We do, moreover, reckon it our duty to be on our guard againſt receiving any pretended new explications of the doctrine of the Trinity, which may have a ſhew of wiſdom, but which ſpeak not according to the oracles of God: Becauſe the Lord hath ſaid to us, *Beware leſt any man ſpoil you through philoſophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Chriſt* ‖.

ARTICLE III. *Of Predeſtination.*

I. WE believe, that God did from eternity chuſe ſome of fallen men to everlaſting life in Chriſt Jeſus; not on account of any goodneſs which he foreſaw would be found in them, rendering them more worthy of his choice than the reſt whom he paſſed by, but according to his ſovereign good pleaſure. *The Lord hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.* The number and aggravations of mens ſins are not the cauſe of any being paſſed by in the decree of election; for God hath choſen ſome of the chief of ſinners: nor is the comparative fewneſs of mens ſins the cauſe why any of them are appointed to obtain ſalvation through our Lord

* 1 John iv. 9. † Rom. viii. 32.
‡ 1 John v. 7. ‖ Col. ii. 8.

Lord Jeſus Chriſt; for every ſinner deſerves eternal death: and no ſinner is ſaved but by free grace.

II. God, who is infinite in goodneſs, acts freely, and according to the council of his own will, in the exerciſe of it. His chuſing of ſome to eternal life, is a diſplay of unmerited goodneſs to them; and the reſt of fallen men whom he paſſed by and left to periſh in their ſins, are not hereby injured; God, who is juſt and good, with-holds nothing from them which they can claim as due to them. He gave them an eminent rank among his creatures, endowing them with rational and immortal ſouls; and they employ all theſe endowments which render them higher *than the beaſts of the field*, in rebellion againſt their Creator and Lord. He gives them many good things belonging to the preſent life; and theſe they alſo employ in ſinning againſt him. He is long-ſuffering towards them; and they become ſo much the more hardened in their iniquities. He condemns, and at length caſts them down under his wrath; but the reaſon why he thus condemns and puniſheth them, is not his paſſing by them in the decree of election, but their own wickedneſs;—and this wickedneſs is voluntary. Though the Lord is ſaid to *harden them*, this he does only by leaving them to the power of their own evil inclinations; not beſtowing on them that grace that ſoftens the heart, the giving of which depends upon his ſovereign pleaſure; and by permitting ſnares and temptations to ſtand in their way. They ſin without any force compelling them. When the Lord gives up men to their own hearts luſts, they walk in their own councils, chuſing and loving that way, *the end of which is death*.

III. This doctrine we judge neceſſary to be taught in the Church. As it is of God, we need not be afraid or aſhamed to avow it; and it is profitable for all to hear it. It lays the ax to the root of human pride, and teacheth us to give the entire glory of our ſalvation to God; ſeeing this ſalvation *is not of him that runneth, nor of him that willeth, but of God who ſheweth mercy*. The elect, being called, and having obtained that precious faith, the end of which is a perfect ſalvation, may know that God hath loved them with an everlaſting love. And nothing will more powerfully and effectually induce them to love and ſerve him who has thus choſen them, *that they ſhould be holy and without blame before him in love*, than this knowledge of their election. And others who

have not this knowledge, can never, in the preſent life, know that they are not elected; and, therefore, cannot juſtly plead that this doctrine has any tendency to diſcourage them. If they underſtand it, and rightly improve it, it will have a quite oppoſite effect on them. Some are appointed to ſalvation, therefore ſome ſhall obtain it; and every one may ſay, Why not I? Therefore I will ſeek it.

IV. If any allege, that all being fixed by the decree of God, they need not uſe means. The anſwer to be given to this wicked and unreaſonable objection is, That God hath indeed decreed whatſoever comes to paſs: All things are as they are, becauſe he decreed that ſo they ſhould be. This all muſt confeſs, or find out ſome other firſt cauſe of things beſide God: *The number of our days, the bounds of our habitation, our going out and coming in, our lying down and riſing up*, with every circumſtance of our life, are all abſolutely fixed in the eternal unalterable decree of God. He foreknew all things, and he foreknew theſe, becauſe he decreed that they ſhould be; yet the belief of this truth does not make us neglect the uſe of means for obtaining the ends we have in view in the ordinary buſineſs of our ſtations; and no more ſhould it make us neglect to ſeek, in the uſe of appointed means, ſalvation by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. The means and the end are inſeparably joined in the decree of God: Seeking ſalvation is the way to obtain it; neglecting to ſeek it, is the way to deſtruction.

V. We teſtify againſt all who, denying that election is *particular, certain, and wholly of grace*, teach, that it is *general*, of whoſoever ſhall repent and believe; that it is *according to the works of men*, God having choſen ſuch as he foreſaw would diſtinguiſh themſelves from the reſt of mankind by a better improvement of the means of grace; and that it is *uncertain*, it being, according to the teachers of this error, poſſible that the elect may totally and finally apoſtatize from that faith and holineſs, upon condition of perſeverance in which, it is alleged they were choſen to eternal life. Theſe errors we abhor, as, by aſſerting them, men deny God the glory due to his name, and give it to creatures. Theſe errors, ſo flattering to human pride, but ſo contrary to the word of God, began to ſpread in the reformed churches about the beginning of the laſt century;

century; they have ever ſince been working as a deadly poiſon, leſs or more in all of them, and have prevailed to the great hurt of Chriſtianity, yea almoſt to its deſtruction in ſome of them.

VI. We do alſo teſtify againſt thoſe who, though they do not oppoſe the received doctrine of the Proteſtant churches concerning predeſtination, yet allege, that it is not ſafe nor profitable to teach it, as if men were wiſer than God; as if what he hath expreſſed in his word were to be kept a ſecret, or as if the abuſe of any article of ſcripture-doctrine were a juſt reaſon for concealing it. The whole doctrine of free grace to ſinners through Jeſus Chriſt is intimately and inſeparably connected with the decree of God chuſing them to ſalvation, not according to any foreſeen merit of theirs, but according to his good pleaſure. And if this election of grace is not either plainly aſſerted, or conſidered as unqueſtionably true, the goſpel cannot be preached; theſe queſtions cannot be aſked, as a reproof to human pride, *O man, who maketh thee to differ? What haſt thou which thou didſt not receive? Now if thou didſt receive it, why doſt thou glory, as if thou hadſt not received it**? nor can that ſong be ſung in the Church, *Not unto us*, not unto our free will, not unto our good inclinations, *but unto* thy free grace, unto thy good will, *O Lord, be the glory.*

ARTICLE IV. *Of Providence.*

I. WE believe that the providence of God extendeth unto, and is concerned about all things. The Lord who made, does alſo uphold, rule, and, according to the counſel of his own will, order the whole univerſe: A *ſparrow falls not to the ground* unnoticed by him: *He numbereth even the hairs of our head.*

II. As to what ſome have called the certain and fixed laws of Nature, theſe are no more than the uſual methods by which the Lord makes one thing inſtrumental in effecting another. He works by means, without means, or contrary to ordinary means, as ſeemeth good in his ſight.

As to what is called *chance*, ſtrictly ſpeaking, there is no ſuch thing: Theſe events, which ſeem moſt accidental to us, are all wiſely and juſtly ordered by the Moſt High. He

* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

He puts down one, and ſets up another; and not only does he raiſe up or caſt down the mighty, but he takes notice of the ſmalleſt things; *he feeds the ravens.*

III. We do therefore teſtify againſt thoſe who deny a particular providence; and againſt thoſe who teach that the univerſe is like a clock or machine, which being once ſet a-going by the hand of its maker, requires no more attention; and who affirm that the conſtitution given to the world in its creation neceſſarily produced every event and circumſtance which have ſince or may afterwards take place in it, without the leaſt concern or agency of the Creator. Theſe errors are ſo plainly condemned, by the whole doctrine and hiſtory of the ſcripture, that no one who truly believes it, can be enſnared by them. They are not new errors; ſome of old maintained them, ſaying, *The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil: The Lord ſeeth not, neither doth the God of Jacob regard what is done.* And the Holy Spirit deſcribes theſe perſons as *the brutiſh among the people*: more ſtupid than the greater part even of the wicked: and concerning ſuch it is threatened, that their inſenſibility ſhould be removed by ſwift deſtruction from the Almighty; *becauſe they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands; he ſhall deſtroy them, and not build them up* *.

ARTICLE V. *Of the Covenant of Works.*

I. GOD, having created man after his own image, capable of knowing, ſerving and enjoying him, gave to him a promiſe of a bleſſed and eternal life, upon condition of his perfect obedience to the divine law, threatening death as a juſt and neceſſary puniſhment of diſobedience; by which death was meant not only the diſſolution of the bodily frame, but everlaſting deſtruction, in being caſt out from the gracious preſence of the Lord, and buried in hell under his wrath. The Lord made trial of man's obedience by a poſitive precept, and by one which was very eaſy to keep; allowing him to eat of every tree of the garden of Eden, where he was placed, except *of the tree of knowledge of good and evil*, intimating to him, *that in the day he ate of it he ſhould ſurely die*; which, upon his tranſgreſſion, was verified, he dying ſpiritually as ſoon as he

* Pſal. xxviii. 5.

he ſinned, and becoming liable to death in its utmoſt extent. To this, man undoubtedly agreed; the Lord propoſed nothing but what was juſt and good; and it was impoſſible for man in his upright eſtate, to heſitate one moment about giving his conſent. The words of Eve to the ſerpent, at firſt alleging the command of God againſt eating the forbidden fruit, plainly ſhew, that our firſt parents conſidered themſelves as under the engagements the Lord had propoſed to them.

II. This tranſaction between God and man may be called *a covenant*. There was a promiſe, a condition, a penalty, and, it cannot be denied, an agreement on man's part to what God propoſed. And though the life promiſed in this covenant was a reward far higher than the obedience of any creature could merit; yet, ſeeing the Lord, abundant in goodneſs and truth, promiſed life as the reward of man's obedience, it may juſtly be called *a covenant of works*.

III. We alſo believe, that, in this covenant, Adam was the repreſentative of his poſterity, with whom they were to ſtand or fall, as he ſtood or fell. Of this we are convinced by the compariſon the Holy Spirit again and again makes between the firſt man Adam and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; declaring, "that as all died in the one, ſo "were all made alive in the other; *that as* by the one, ſin "and death entered into the world, *ſo* by the other righ-"teouſneſs and life entered; *and that, as*, by the offence of "the one, many were made ſinners, *ſo*, by the obedience "of the other, many were made righteous*; which can only refer to the dying or living, the making ſinners, or the making righteous, of thoſe whom each of them did, as a public perſon and as a covenant-head, repreſent.

IV. We do therefore reject the opinion of them who affirm, that there was no covenant made with Adam, or that he was not the repreſentative of his poſterity. This error is deſigned to prepare the way for denying original ſin, and for perverting the whole doctrine of redemption.

ARTICLE VI. *Of Man in his fallen State.*

I. WE acknowledge, that though man was made upright, yet being left to act freely according to his own will,

* Rom. v. 19.

will, and, as a creature, being liable to change, he tranſgreſſed the covenant God had made with him; and this firſt man Adam being the repreſentative of his poſterity, we ſinned and fell in him, and are now in our natural ſtate, under the guilt of Adam's tranſgreſſion, under the curſe due to it, and liable to the eternal wrath threatened as its juſt puniſhment. *By one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners*; not merely taught by his example to ſin, not merely diſpoſed to commit ſin by having a corrupt nature tranſmitted from him to them; but *made* or *conſtituted* ſinners, the guilt of this one man, their repreſentative, being imputed to them, or by the law accounted theirs.

II. We alſo acknowledge, that we, being by nature *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, are as unable of ourſelves to do any work truly good and acceptable to God, as thoſe dead, whom we ſee laid in the grave, are unable of themſelves to riſe and perform the works of the living. This depravation of our nature, we confeſs to be the ſpring of all actual tranſgreſſion. The *tree being evil*, the fruit cannot be good; nor can a *corrupt fountain* ſend forth any but bitter ſtreams. *Every imagination of the heart of man*, till changed by grace, *is evil, from his youth evil, only evil*, and continually evil: And it muſt be ſo; for *who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?*

III. We do moreover acknowledge, that a ſenſe of guilt, working in fallen unrenewed men, a fear of God's wrath, their wicked minds are filled with enmity againſt him; and the more clearly they diſcern the holineſs of his law, the extent of its commandments, and the righteous ſeverity of its threatenings, this enmity of the heart becomes the more violent. Thus the *law*, which *is holy, juſt and good*, and which ſhewed to innocent man an attainable and a plain path to life, is ſo far from leading fallen man to life, that his corruption takes occaſion from it to work more vehemently. The more cloſely and plainly the law is urged on the conſcience, the more does the rebellion of his heart againſt God, the Lawgiver, diſplay itſelf in hatred at the holy commandment. The law is, however, to be preached to ſinners along with the goſpel. They who continue under it, muſt hear what it ſaith to them, that they may be convinced of their inability to anſwer its demands; that they may ſee how dreadful

their

their condition is; and that they, thus killed by the law, may be perſuaded to liſten to the goſpel, which manifeſteth Jeſus Chriſt the Saviour, as the *end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.*

IV. We do therefore teſtify againſt thoſe who teach, that there is no ſuch thing as original ſin; or that, if there be, it conſiſts only in the want of that righteouſneſs in which man was created; or, at moſt, in the depravation of our nature, not in our guilt, by the imputation of Adam's firſt tranſgreſſion to us his poſterity. This error is deſigned to prepare the way for denying the imputation of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt to us for our juſtification before God. We alſo teſtify againſt all who teach, that we have ſuffered ſo very little by the fall, that it is in our own power, by the help of the external means given us, to repair our loſs; and who deny that there is any abſolute need of the all-powerful influence of the Spirit and grace of God to renew us, and to work in us to will and to do that which is well pleaſing in his ſight. Such we account deceivers, who would lead us away from Jeſus Chriſt, the Lord who healeth us. *We have deſtroyed ourſelves, but in him is our help.*

ARTICLE VII. *Of the Obligation of the Covenant of Works on Men in their Natural State.*

I. WE do alſo acknowledge, as a truth plainly taught in the word of God, and neceſſarily connected with what we have already declared, that all men, in their natural ſtate, are under the law given to Adam, and under it in the ſame form in which it was given to him, *viz.* that of a Covenant of works. This law being, as to the matter or ſubſtance of it, written on man's heart in creation, was afterwards expreſſed in the ten commandments given at Sinai; to put Iſrael in mind of their duty, to convince them of the abſolute impoſſibility of obtaining acceptance before God by their obedience, ſeeing they came ſo far ſhort of what was required, and to excite them to look by faith, through the vail of the ceremonies and ſacrifices which God then appointed in the Church, to the promiſed Meſſiah, the Salvation of Iſrael; and this law is the perpetual and unalterable rule of righteouſneſs, particularly of the duty we owe to God and to one another. Under it,

it, in ſome form, all men muſt be, and men, in their natural ſtate, can be under it in no other form than that in which they originally were in their firſt head: though they fail in their duty, they are ſtill bound to it; and bound to it under the ſame penalty or threatening of death as ever: *the promiſe of life* ſtill remains to *the man who doth theſe things* which the law requires; *he ſhall live by them.* If any could ſatisfy the law for their offences, and fulfil whatever it commands, they would be accepted, and declared righteous by God the Lawgiver: but this no one can do. *By the deeds of the law,* that is, by ſuch deeds as men are now able to perform in obedience to the law, *ſhall no fleſh be juſtified in the ſight of God.*

II. That men in their natural ſtate are univerſally under a law, cannot be denied by any who believe the ſcriptures, in which this is ſo often and ſo plainly aſſerted; and that this is not the Ceremonial law, nor yet the Moral law, merely as a rule of righteouſneſs, is no leſs unqueſtionable. The Ceremonial law extended to the Jews only; it did not ſtop every mouth, nor declare the whole world guilty before God. It is ſaid concerning the law which men, in their natural ſtate, are under, that *as many as are of its works,* that is, as many as adhere to it, and continue ſubject to it, *are under the curſe.* This cannot be ſaid of the Ceremonial law: many who lived and died under it, were bleſſed of God and precious in his ſight. It never brought any under the curſe, except when they, not underſtanding the deſign of it, adhered to it as a part of the Covenant of works; ſeeking life by their obedience to it, not by Chriſt, to whom it directed them. Nor can it be ſaid, that as *many as are under the law,* as a rule of righteouſneſs, *are under the curſe;* if they were, no rational creature could be delivered from the curſe, without their obligation to love and ſerve God, becoming void, which is impoſſible. Thus the law, under which men in their natural ſtate are, is neither a new law which God has given to them ſince the fall, nor the law given to Adam publiſhed in any new form. All ſtand where he left them, till they are brought into a new ſtate by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

III. It is not the proclamation of the goſpel, but the receiving that ſalvation offered in it, which ſets men free from the law as a Covenant; which may be thus illuſtrated.

ſtrated: If a creditor direct his debtor to a ſurety, who is able and willing to fulfil his engagements for him; yet if the debtor, though unable to pay, and bound in duty to follow the direction given him, be ſo obſtinate and fooliſh as to refuſe to employ the ſurety; he, in that caſe, remains under the ſame engagements as before: it is not the creditor's offer to deal with him by a ſurety, but his acceptance of the offer that would ſet him free. Moreover, if there is any promiſe made to this debtor of ſome good thing which he ſhould have upon fulfilling his engagements, ſtill, upon the performance of the condition, it would become due to him. It is our duty to lay hold on the Covenant of grace which the Lord proclaims to us; but, if we refuſe, we thereby avow our adherence to the Covenant of works, declaring, that we will ſeek life according to it only. Thus, to the unbelieving, the obligation of the Covenant of works is far from being made void by the revelation of the Covenant of grace.

IV. We do, therefore, reject the opinion of thoſe who teach, that men, in their natural ſtate, are not under the ſame Covenant made with Adam, and debtors to do the whole law. The deſign of this error is, firſt, to prepare the way for denying the ſatisfaction of Chriſt; and, next, for introducing into the place of the goſpel a new law, preſcribing terms of acceptance with God, which are ſaid to be eaſier and better adapted to our fallen ſtate than thoſe of the firſt Covenant. And we maintain, that the Lord never did, nor ever will accommodate his law to the ſinful weakneſs of men; it being inconſiſtent with his holy nature to require leſs than a perfect obedience, or a loving him *with all the heart and ſoul and mind and ſtrength, and our neighbour as ourſelves*: and beſides, no accommodation of God's law to our weakneſs would avail; ſince our endeavours, in our fallen ſtate, to keep the leaſt of God's commandments, are attended with ſuch imperfections, as, in themſelves, deſerve eternal death.

ARTICLE VIII. *Of the Suretiſhip and Satisfaction of* CHRIST.

I. WE believe, that Jeſus Chriſt, our Surety, was made under the law which Adam broke, and which all men in their natural ſtate are under; otherwiſe it could not be

ſaid, that *he was made under the law to redeem them who are under the law* *: he came not only, or chiefly, to redeem the Jews from the burden of the Ceremonial law, but to redeem both Jews and Gentiles from the curſe of that law or Covenant of works which extends to all the human race in their natural ſtate, and condemns them all to death; they being, without exception, tranſgreſſors of it. The Gentiles were, in no ſenſe, under the Ceremonial law: but Chriſt was made under the law, and made a curſe for all whom he redeemed, that he might redeem them all from the curſe of the law: without an intereſt in which redemption, neither Jews nor Gentiles could *receive the adoption of ſons.*

II. Further, as thoſe whom our Lord Jeſus repreſented, owed both a debt of obedience and of ſuffering, neither of which they were able to pay; he, according to his engagement, paid both for them. It became him to fulfil all righteouſneſs in the place of his people. All that was required, he, as their Surety, performed. He left no one demand, which the law-covenant had upon them, unanſwered. Thus, all he did and ſuffered, from the time he was made manifeſt in the fleſh, till he yielded up his ſpirit on the croſs, was done and ſuffered, not merely on our account or for our good, but *in our place*, by him as our *Repreſentative* and *Surety*: and his whole righteouſneſs, conſiſting in his obedience even unto death, is imputed to believers for their juſtification before God; that is, it is accounted theirs as much as if they had performed it in their own perſons. As, among men, the payment of a debt by a ſurety is accounted by the law his payment for whom it was made; ſo Chriſt, by this obedience unto death, obtained for us, not merely deliverance from wrath, but an heavenly inheritance, with all the bleſſings we need to render us meet for it, or to bring us forward to the enjoyment of it. *In him we are complete: he is made of God to us wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption* †.

III. Believing that this is the doctrine taught in the ſcriptures of truth, and that the very exiſtence of the Chriſtian Church depends upon holding it faſt, and improving it, in drawing nigh unto God as reconciled to us in Chriſt, we teſtify againſt the following errors: *firſt*, That

* Gal. iv. 4, 5. † 1 Cor. i. 30.

That all Chriſt did and ſuffered was indeed on our account, and for our good, inaſmuch as thereby he ſet us an example of holineſs and patience, and atteſted to us the truth of the doctrine he taught, by dying for it; but that he did not obey and ſuffer in our place, and as our ſurety. This error is a manifeſt contradicting of the ſcripture, which aſſures us, that Chriſt came *to give his life a ranſom for many*; that *he is the propitiation for our ſins*, and that he, *the Juſt, ſuffered for the unjuſt, that he might bring us unto God*. It is a degrading of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt from the character of a Saviour to that of an eminent teacher; and a placing of him on a level with the prophets, apoſtles, and other ſervants of God,—who did alſo, in their lives, ſet us an example of holineſs and patience, though not perfect like that of Chriſt; and atteſted the truth of the doctrine they taught, by dying as witneſſes for it. Thus, what they did and ſuffered was on account of the Church, and for its good; but never any of them were what Chriſt is, The SAVIOUR of the Church. *Secondly*, That Chriſt made a perfect ſatisfaction for none, but a general ſatisfaction for all; in conſequence of which, God, though fully reconciled to none, is willing to be reconciled to all, or any who come up to the terms of that which the teachers of this error call the *new law*, or goſpel-covenant; but which may, with greater propriety, be called a new covenant of works, deviſed by men, but utterly unknown in the revelation which God has given us of his will. *Thirdly*, That the ſatisfaction which Chriſt made for us, conſiſted wholly in his ſufferings, not in his active obedience to the law. The ſcriptures make no ſuch diſtinction; therefore we reject all opinions founded upon it, as doctrines of men. Chriſt was *made under the law*, not for himſelf, but ſolely for us. He is ſaid to *have taken our infirmities* upon himſelf, and *to have borne our ſickneſſes*; while, in his active obedience to the law, he was ſerving God, and doing offices of kindneſs to mankind, in healing their diſeaſes. If his death is ſometimes mentioned as expreſſing the whole of what he did for us, it is becauſe it was the moſt remarkable, and the finiſhing part of his obedience. He did not merely take away our ſins, but, by his perfect righteouſneſs, comprehending his conformity to the law in nature, heart, and life, he obtained that we ſhould *live* and *reign*

with him; leſs than this could not have removed the curſe, and opened the path of life to us.

ARTICLE IX. *Of the extent of Redemption.*

I. OUR Lord Jeſus Chriſt was a repreſentative and ſurety for the elect only; he died for them only, and for none elſe in any reſpect; and all for whom he died ſhall infallibly be ſaved. God is juſt, and will not require double payment for the ſame debt. Had ſatisfaction been made by Chriſt for the ſins of all men, none would have periſhed under the curſe; death, the wages of ſin, would not have been due to any, if Chriſt had ſuffered it for the whole human race. Our Lord Jeſus himſelf tells us, *that he laid down his life for his ſheep*; that *he knew who they were*; that *they ſhould all hear his voice*, that is, acknowledge him as the good ſhepherd of their ſouls; that he *would give them eternal life*; and that *they ſhould never periſh, nor any pluck them out of his hand* *. He alſo declares, that *they were given him by the Father*; adding, that *all who were thus given him, ſhould certainly come to him.* Nothing can be more evident than that theſe aſſertions of our Lord concerning his ſheep, expreſs what is peculiar to a choſen number, and not what is applicable to the whole of mankind.

II. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, "while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us †." And ſhall that love have no further effects on thoſe for whom Chriſt died? Another text may ſerve as an anſwer to that queſtion: "He that ſpared not his own Son, but deliver-"ed him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo "freely give us all things ‡?" Yes, ſurely he will ſend the Holy Spirit to put us in poſſeſſion of the benefits which flow from the death of Chriſt. That free love which gave Chriſt to die for ſinners, will make all for whom he died, through the gift of his righteouſneſs, and through the communication of his quickening Spirit, to reign in life by him and with him; for if, "when they were ene-"mies, they were reconciled to God by the death of his "Son, much more, being reconciled, they ſhall be ſaved "by his life ‖."

III. When

* John x. 27, 28.
† Rom. v. 8.
‡ Rom. viii. 32.
‖ Rom. v. 10.

III. When Chriſt is ſaid to have *died for all*, and to be *a propitiation for the whole world*, theſe expreſſions are to be underſtood in a limited ſenſe, (as they moſt certainly are to be underſtood in other paſſages of ſcripture), not as ſignifying, that Chriſt died for every individual of mankind, or for every man in the whole world, but that he died for all the elect; for the whole world of the redeemed; for all of every nation, kindred and language, who belong to the election of grace; and that God hath ſet him forth to be *a propitiation through faith in his blood*, to ſinners of every deſcription. We do not wreſt the ſcripture, while we thus explain what is more obſcure in ſome texts, by others where the matter in queſtion is more expreſsly taught.

IV. Election, redemption, interceſſion, and eternal ſalvation, are inſeparable, or of equal extent. He who has an intereſt in any one of theſe, has an intereſt in the whole. Chriſt's dying for ſinners, is a manifeſtation of love to them, which had no beginning, and will have no end. We do, therefore, teſtify againſt thoſe who teach, that, though Chriſt died, in a ſpecial manner, for thoſe who are ſaved, yet he died, in ſome ſenſe, for thoſe *who periſh*. The ſcripture makes no ſuch diſtinction: the *ſome ſenſe* which they plead for, has either no meaning, or elſe leads to other dangerous errors. We do alſo teſtify againſt the more common error of thoſe who teach, that the death of Chriſt was not particularly intended for the redemption of any; but that the deſign of his death was to render ſalvation equally attainable to all. This error, like others, is deſigned to prepare the way for that ſcheme of doctrine, whereby men are taught, that the power of believing, repenting, and yielding ſincere obedience, having, by the death of Chriſt, been obtained for all, God will ſave them, upon condition of their duly exerciſing that power. Thus, that error proves a removing from the grace of Chriſt to another goſpel; which is not indeed the goſpel, but bears ſo much of a reſemblance to it, as may deceive the ſimple.

V. We do alſo reject the opinion of thoſe who teach, that Chriſt did, by his death, purchaſe the common benefits of life. Theſe benefits are given to the reprobate, as meat, drink and clothing are given to criminals lying under ſentence of death, not to be put in execution till an appointed time. All the bleſſings purchaſed by Chriſt,

are of that nature that the Holy Spirit only can make us partakers of them; and they can be received by faith only; and they are ever deſcribed as ſuch in the ſcripture. Thus common benefits, conſidered in themſelves, cannot properly be ſaid to have been purchaſed by Chriſt, even for the elect. God preſerves them in life, though wicked, and abuſers of his common bounty, till the time of their converſion; and then being brought into his covenant of grace, as his bleſſing reſts on them, ſo what proviſion they need for their outward ſtate is given to them as to children, free from that curſe which is upon *the baſket and ſtore of the wicked;* and thus all the true good that is in theſe benefits to believers flows from the death of Chriſt: the ſame proviſion might have been given them, though he had never died for them; but not with the ſame gracious deſign in the giver, nor with the ſame bleſſing attending it to them.

ARTICLE X. *Of the Goſpel, and of the difference between it and the Law.*

I. WE declare, that the goſpel, in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word, contains no commands or threatenings; being only a promiſe of grace to ſinners through Jeſus Chriſt, or *glad tidings of great joy*, whereby God proclaims to us, that *he has ſent his Son to ſave us; that whoſoever believeth on the Son hath everlaſting life, and ſhall not come into condemnation;* and that every one is warranted to believe on him, he being come to ſave ſinners; the *chief* of whom, applying to him, need not fear that he will reject them.

II. All *commands* belong to the law; thoſe which enjoin faith, repentance, and other duties peculiar to men under a diſpenſation of grace not excepted. Diſobedience to theſe commands is a ſin which the law condemns. This it could not do, if they did not belong to it; for where there is no law, there is no tranſgreſſion. Neither do theſe commands belong to any new law given ſince the fall. New revelations have been made to men, and duties have been required of them agreeable to the Lord's diſpenſations towards them, and agreeable to the circumſtances in which they ſtood as fallen and guilty, or as redeemed and ſaved; but no new law has been given them;

for

for the first was perfect, and required obedience to God in all things, and for ever. The law given to Adam enjoined every duty required of us now, inasmuch as it bound him and his posterity to believe not only what God had then revealed, but every thing which he might afterwards reveal; and to obey not only what God had then commanded, but every thing which he might afterwards command.

III. The law is subservient to the gospel, and therefore to be preached along with it. *By the law is the knowledge of sin.* It is useful for convincing sinners, that they need salvation. It is useful for shewing believers what they deserved, and what they owe to God, rich in mercy, who *sent forth his Son made under the law to redeem them from its curse.* It is useful for teaching all, what fear, love and service, the Lord requires of them. When our Lord gave his apostles a commission to *go into all the world, and preach the gospel,* he intended that they should preach every article of revealed truth, the design of the whole being the same, *viz.* to lead sinners to him for that salvation which they so much need, and to shew them how, having received it, they "should walk worthy of the Lord unto "all well pleasing, fruitful in every good work, that he "may be glorified in them and by them. All scripture "is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for "doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in "righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, be-"ing thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Thus every article of scripture-truth, being intimately connected with the gospel, and subservient to it, the whole may be, and justly is called the gospel; yet the law, taken by itself, is not the gospel, but is distinct from it; and it is necessary to observe this distinction, lest we confound things that are so extremely opposite to one another.

IV. Though the law be taught, as it is expressed in the word of God; yet, if the design for which it is there recorded by the Holy Spirit, be neglected; if men are directed to seek eternal life by their obedience to it, not warned to flee from it, as a covenant of works, to Christ the Saviour, the gospel is by such teachers thrust out of the Church; to them who receive such doctrine, *Christ is become of none effect;* seeking *justification by the law,* they avow an opposition to the grace of God manifested in him.

V.

V. We teſtify, particularly, againſt thoſe who teach, that the goſpel is a new law, having commands and threatenings peculiar to itſelf, and diſtinct from thoſe which belong to the law given to Adam. This error is a ſubverting both of the law and of the goſpel.—Of the law; as it puts an imperfect law in the place of that holy law which God has given us, and an imperfect obedience in the place of that perfect righteouſneſs which his law requires.—Of the goſpel; as, according to the teachers of this error, it is no more the glorious goſpel of the free grace of God, but a new law of works, preſcribing conditions to be performed by men, upon the performance of which, they may claim eternal life as a reward, *not of grace, but of debt.* If ſalvation *is of works, then it is no more of grace, otherwiſe grace is no more grace;* but if it be, as it verily is, *of grace, then it is no more of works, otherwiſe work is no more work**.

Theſe two ways of ſeeking ſalvation are oppoſite to one another: There is no reconciling them. If our works are in any degree the procuring cauſe of ſalvation, that diſtinguiſhing grace of God which plucks ſome brands out of the burning, while others are left to periſh, has no ſhare in it.

ARTICLE XI. *Of the univerſal offer of Salvation made in the Goſpel.*

I. WE believe, that a free and unlimited offer is made of ſalvation through Chriſt to all who hear the goſpel; and that this offer is not made upon a ſuppoſition of Chriſt's having died for all mankind, but by virtue of the commiſſion which God has given *to preach the goſpel to every creature* †; that is, to every ſinner of the human race without exception. To preach the goſpel is to proclaim the glad tidings of ſalvation as a meſſage from God to fallen men; it is to tell them, that ſalvation is ſent to them; that *all things are ready*: Here is a Saviour for them; forgiveneſs of ſins for them; eternal life for them; all a free gift; which the moſt vile and unworthy may, without heſitation, and without fear of preſumption, inſtantly receive and claim as theirs. Farther, ſinners are to be told, that it is vain for them to delay, thinking they ſhall make ſome

* Rom. xi. 6. † Mark xvi. 15.

ſome better preparation for coming to Chriſt. He requires them to come, guilty and vile as they are; he receiveth ſuch. *It is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that he came to ſave ſinners.* Moreover, all ſuch attempts of ſinners to make themſelves better, do not only fail of ſucceſs, but while they delay coming to Chriſt, the roll of their iniquities is increaſing; they are *reſiſting the counſel of God*, and are every moment of their life in danger of hell; deſtruction is hanging over their heads, and may fall on them in an hour when they think not of it. *He that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him* *.

II. If any object, that ſeeing ſome were before ordained to condemnation, were not redeemed by the death of Chriſt, and ſhall never believe, how then ſhall any man know, whether the Lord intends him in the univerſal offer of ſalvation? The anſwer to be given is. The Lord intends all who hear the goſpel, in telling them what is their duty. *This is the work of God;* the work which he commands, and approves, *that we believe on him whom he hath ſent* †. It is alſo a truth, *that whoſoever believeth, ſhall be ſaved.* As *to ſecret things*, they *belong to the Lord our God, but thoſe things which are revealed to us* ‡. Never did any man accept this offer from an aſſurance given him before he accepted it, that he was ordained to life; for of this no one can be aſſured till it be made manifeſt by his faith. On the other hand, never did any man reject this offer from an aſſurance given him before he rejected it, that he was ordained to condemnation; for of this no one can be aſſured till he is caſt into that priſon out of which there is no redemption. They who refuſe the ſalvation offered in the goſpel, are not moved to refuſe it from this conſideration, That they were not elected, or that Chriſt died not for them, ſeeing this is what they do not know: but they are moved to refuſe it by the enmity of their hearts againſt God, particularly by their deep-rooted averſion to ſalvation by free grace through Jeſus Chriſt; "who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem "us from all iniquity." To be ſaved by grace is diſpleaſing to their pride; to be ſaved unto holineſs is diſpleaſing to their carnality. They are alſo moved to reject this ſalvation,

*John iii. 18. 36. † John vi. 29. ‡ Deut. xxix. 29.

ſalvation, through that ignorance of it which prevails in all the haters of it. They are not careful to underſtand what they deſpiſe; and they are not of themſelves able to learn. "The natural man receiveth not the things of "the Spirit of God; they are fooliſhneſs to him, neither "can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcern-"ed*." Thus none periſh who hear the goſpel, but through their own poſitive rejection *of the counſel of God*. It is not becauſe Chriſt will not receive them, but becauſe they *will not come to him*, that they fail of obtaining ſalvation. *No man*, ſays our Lord, *can come unto me, except the Father who hath ſent me draw him*†. But why can no man come? What ſtands in the way? Nothing. The way is open; but none of themſelves are willing to come. The complaint our Lord brought againſt the Jews, *Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life*‡, lies againſt all men acting according to their natural principles and inclinations. Comparing the texts now mentioned, it is manifeſt, that our inability to come to Chriſt, or, in other words, to accept the offer of ſalvation, ariſes from the blindneſs and perverſeneſs of our own minds. The conſideration of theſe things ſhould humble us, and put us on our guard againſt caſting the blame of our unbelief on God. Are ſome ordained to condemnation? "Let us, therefore, fear, leſt a promiſe "being left us of entering into God's reſt, any of us "ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it through unbelief**." If we lay hold on the promiſe of God, which is declared as a ground of faith to all in the goſpel, we ſhall not find ourſelves left out of the number ordained to eternal life. *Him that cometh to me*, ſays our Lord Jeſus, *I will in no wiſe caſt out*††.

III. That the offer of ſalvation is to all who hear the goſpel, will be found a truth by thoſe who reject it. The Lord is now ſaying to them, *Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life*. Yet a little while, and to thoſe who perſevere in their obſtinacy, he will ſay, *Ye would not come unto me*: Ye had an offer made you; *I called but ye refuſed. Ye would have none of me*; therefore I do not acknowledge you as mine; *Depart from me ye workers of iniquity*. Such will be condemned, *becauſe they believed not*

* 1 Cor. ii. 14. † John vi. 44. ‡ John v. 40.
** Heb. iv. 1. †† John vi. 37.

not on the name of the Son of God. This would make no part, far leſs the chief part, of the charge againſt them, if they had not been called to believe on his name.

IV. The Lord, in calling ſinners to receive ſalvation, makes no exception of any claſs of them. He ſays to *the ſtout-hearted and far from righteouſneſs, Hearken unto me: I bring near my righteouſneſs, and my ſalvation ſhall not tarry.* He ſays to the fooliſh, who are *ſpending their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which ſatisfieth not, Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear and your ſoul ſhall live: And I will make an everlaſting covenant with you, even the ſure mercies of David* *. The Lord Chriſt who is ſtill ſpeaking from heaven, is ſaying to thoſe who, like the unbelieving Jews, are remarkable for their inſenſibility, *My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven* †; and to the lukewarm and proud, as he did to the Laodiceans: "I counſel you to buy of me "gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; white "raiment, that you may be clothed; and anoint your "eyes with eye-ſalve, that you may ſee ‡:" Ye are wretched and miſerable and poor and blind and naked, and know not that ye are ſo; take all of me as a free gift: "Whoſoever will, let him come, and take of the waters "of life freely. ‖" His call does not find men willing, but his Spirit and grace accompanying it, makes them ſo. He ſpeaks to the dead, and his glory is manifeſted in this, that his voice awakeneth them to life: "The hour is "coming, and now is, when the dead ſhall hear the voice "of the Son of God, and they that hear ſhall live §."

V. It is a truth, that none will ever believe in Chriſt till they are ſo far convinced of their ſins, as to be perſuaded that they need ſalvation from them: They who think they are whole, will alſo think that they need no phyſician. Their inſenſibility, however, does by no means render them improper objects of that call, which, through the bleſſing of the Lord, is uſeful to awake them; nor does it leſſen the obligation they are under, by the divine command, *to believe on the name of Jeſus Chriſt.*

VI We teſtify againſt thoſe who teach, that the offer of ſalvation in the goſpel is made to none but awakened and

* Iſa. lv. 2, 3. † John vi. 32. ‡ Rev. iii. 18.
‖ Rev. xxii. 17. § John v. 25.

and penitent ſinners; eſpecially againſt thoſe who teach, that it is mens repentance, their deſires of ſalvation, or ſome other ſuppoſed good thing in them, that gives them a right, or, as ſome ſpeak, qualifies them to come to Chriſt; and that ſinners muſt not come to Chriſt, nor be exhorted to come to him, till they be prepared for receiving him. The teachers of this error contradict the glorious goſpel of the Son of God, which directs us to come to him as the deſeaſed did in the days of his fleſh, that *we may be healed*; not firſt to heal ourſelves, and then come to him. Men deceive themſelves, imagining they have come to Chriſt, while they are yet far from him; and it is neceſſary, in preaching the goſpel, to lay open their deceit, and to warn them of their danger: But ſurely they cannot fly too ſpeedily *for refuge to lay hold on the hope ſet before them.*

ARTICLE XII. *Of the Condition of the Covenant of Grace.*

1. WE believe that the New Covenant, otherwiſe called the Covenant of grace, being made with Chriſt as the Repreſentative and Surety of the elect, the condition of it was his perfect obedience to all that the law required of him in that character. Now the law required, that its precepts ſhould be obeyed; that ſatisfaction ſhould be made for the tranſgreſſions committed againſt it; and that both this obedience and ſatisfaction ſhould proceed from a willing mind, from pure love to God, and from a ſupreme regard to his glory. Thus the condition of that Covenant is juſtly ſaid to be the righteouſneſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. The law required righteouſneſs of heart, righteouſneſs of life, and righteouſneſs in ſatisfying for offences: And he anſwered all its demands in the place of thoſe whom he repreſented: To them this Covenant, therefore, conſiſts only of free and gracious promiſes. When God brings the elect actually into this Covenant, no condition is required to give them a right to the bleſſings of it: He ſays to them, *I will be your God, and ye ſhall be my people*: And he powerfully moves their hearts to ſay, AMEN, *Be it, O Lord, according to thy word*; *Behold we come to thee*; we truſt in thee, *for thou art the Lord our God.* The faith, by which they ſo ſpeak, and by which they take hold of this Covenant, is not and cannot properly be called

led a condition of it: only there is ſuch neceſſary connection between faith and ſalvation, as there is between the receiving and enjoying of a gift. Faith which is expreſſed in the ſcripture by *taking*, *receiving*, and other ſuch deſignations, is itſelf the gift of God; is wrought in the heart by his Holy Spirit, and is exerciſed only as the Spirit ſtrengthens us. He does not give us a certain degree of power enabling us to believe, and then leave us to improve that power the beſt way we can. No; he is the *author and finiſher of faith*; the beginning, the exerciſe and the increaſe of it are all from him; the effect of his grace, and the work of his Spirit. The promiſe of faith belongs to the glad tidings of ſalvation. *Surely, ſhall one ſay, in the Lord have I righteouſneſs, and in him have I ſtrength* *. *A willing people ſhall come* to him, *viz.* believe on him, *in the day of his power*. If faith were not comprehended in the promiſe, let the other bleſſings contained in it be ever ſo great and manifold, they would ſignify nothing to us, they being ſuſpended on a condition which we are not able to perform: for *no man can believe, except it be given him from above*.

II. We reckon it improper to ſpeak of faith as being, on our part, the condition of the new Covenant. Good men, who meant no prejudice to the doctrine of free grace, have called it ſo. We would not, however, do any honour to their memory, by adhering to their language in this matter; ſeeing it is liable to be, and actually is uſed to ſubvert the truth. The believing ſinner gives nothing, offers nothing of his own, as any way entitling him to favour; claims no bleſſing as due to him on account of any thing he has done or can do. He comes as poor and needy, guilty and vile; giving himſelf to Chriſt to be waſhed, juſtified, and ſanctified by him; claiming all bleſſings as a free gift offered to him in the goſpel; as obtained for him ſolely by Chriſt, *in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace* †.

ARTICLE XIII. *Of Faith.*

I. WE maintain, that true faith is a receiving the teſtimony of God concerning his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord,

* Iſa. xlv. 24. † Epheſ. i. 7.

not merely as true, but as his teſtimony to us. It is a *receiving of Chriſt*: But how can we receive him, if not as given to us, and as our Saviour? It is a *truſting in him*: But how ſhall we truſt in him, unleſs we are aſſured that he will help us? It is a *flying to him for refuge*: But how can we fly to him for refuge, unleſs we are aſſured that we ſhall find ſafety in him? He does not call us to come to him heſitating and doubting, whether he will receive us; ſo far as ſuch heſitation and doubts prevail, ſo far unbelief, not faith, prevails. The language of the goſpel is, *I am your God*; the anſwer of faith is, *We are thy people. The promiſe is to you*, ſaith the Lord; the anſwer of faith is, We receive and believe it, as the word of him who cannot lie. It is to be obſerved, that it is not merely ſaid, the promiſe is true; but *the promiſe is to you*. And if it be not believed as a promiſe to us, the truth of him who ſpeaks is denied. *He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar; becauſe he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son: And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son* *. Thus there is no way left for goſpel-hearers to periſh, but by a poſitive denial of the faithfulneſs of the Holy One of Iſrael.

II. Every one knows, that human faith is believing a human teſtimony. If a man ſhould tell us that he forgave us a debt we owed him, and certain injuries we had done to him; and beſides, that he made us a gift of an inheritance: if we really believed him, would we not believe the debt forgiven, the man reconciled to us, and the inheritance ours? Now, what elſe is divine faith, than believing a divine teſtimony? And what is our believing the goſpel, but our believing God's teſtimony to us; that he forgives our ſins, is reconciled to us, and gives us eternal life? Is the teſtimony of man worthy of more particular credit than that of God? It is moſt unreaſonable to object, that we may be ſure the man, in the ſuppoſed caſe, intends us a favour, but that we are not ſure that God intends to make us partakers of ſalvation. The ſecret intention of the man, in the ſuppoſed caſe, muſt be unknown to us, as well as the ſecret intention of God, in making the goſpel-proclamation to us. In either caſe, it is only what is declared or revealed to us, that

* 1 John v. 10, 11.

that we have to do with. The Lord ſpeaks to all; and none who believe him as ſpeaking to them ſhall be diſappointed.

III. The faith of this, that Chriſt is able to ſave all, and willing to ſave ſome, is no more than what every one muſt have who really believes the truth of the ſcriptures; yet this is a faith which wicked men and devils may have. But the great enquiry of an awakened ſinner is this, Is God ſpeaking in the promiſe to me? Is there forgiveneſs with God for me? And till the Holy Spirit perſuade him that theſe queſtions ought to be anſwered in the affirmative, he can have no reſt in his mind. The poor jailor might have continued in his fears, had he not received the goſpel which Paul preached, as a meſſage from God particularly directed to him; which meſſage is as particularly directed to every one that hears it, *viz. Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved**.

IV. Faith is often weak. The body of death is often very ſtrong in Chriſtians. Hence their unbelief ſpeaks louder than their faith, and they are diſquieted with fears. Sometimes they are careleſs, and ſunk in a kind of ſpiritual ſleep; ſo that they are not much concerned to have their weak faith ſtrengthened: but as faith is, ſo will aſſurance be. Where the one is weak, the other will be weak. But ſtill where the one is, there will the other be alſo. Faith contains, in its very nature, an aſſurance of the thing believed; and that which true faith believes, is, that God is reconciled to us in Chriſt.

V. This aſſurance which is in faith, is very different from the aſſurance that we are already partakers of grace and ſalvation. This laſt is an anſwer to the enquiry made by one in ſelf-examination; Am I a Chriſtian? Is my faith of the true kind? Do the fruits of it manifeſt it to be that which is the diſtinguiſhing faith of God's elect? The aſſurance of faith is an anſwer to the enquiry; Does God give eternal life, not to others only, but to me? May I truſt, not only that Chriſt will ſave ſome, but that he will ſave me?

VI. We teſtify againſt all who deny, that any perſuaſion, aſſurance, or confidence, that we, in particular, through the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall be ſaved, belongs to the nature of faith; and who affirm that faith

* Acts xvi. 31.

is only a perſuaſion that God is merciful in Chriſt; and that Chriſt is able and willing to ſave all who come to him: and who further affirm, that we muſt firſt come to Chriſt, and know that we are already true believers, before we can claim Chriſt as ours in particular; and who deny that ſuch a claim belongs to the nature of faith. What ſuch deſcribe as faith, is much the ſame with the general doubtſome faith, once univerſally rejected by Proteſtants, and reckoned among the errors of the Popiſh Church. It is to be lamented, that Proteſtants have not left the generation of Antichriſt in the ſole poſſeſſion of it.

ARTICLE XIV. *Of Repentance.*

I. WE declare, that evangelical repentance is the fruit of faith. The word *repentance* does, in ſcripture, ſometimes expreſs the whole of that change which takes place in the converſion of a ſinner unto God; as when it is ſaid, *Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand**. In this ſenſe, it comprehends faith in Chriſt, ſorrow for ſin, love to God, and a diſpoſition to obey him. It is alſo uſed, in ſcripture, to expreſs that ſenſe of guilt, and fear of wrath, which may be found in the unregenerate, as when Judas is ſaid to have repented; but the repentance which is mentioned as a diſtinguiſhing gift of God to his people, and as different from faith, muſt, in the nature of things, follow after it.

II. All repentance flows from ſome kind of faith; and according to a man's faith, ſo will his repentance be. If he is only perſuaded that ſin is terrible in its conſequences, as expoſing the tranſgreſſor to the wrath of God; then he will only repent of ſin, not as evil in itſelf, but as evil in its effects; he will ſtill love ſin, though he hate its wages. Again, if a man is perſuaded that ſin is evil, as being abominable in God's ſight, and deforming to the ſoul, he will loathe it, and hate it with a perfect hatred: he will hate the work as well as the wages of iniquity. True repentance, being a *ſorrow after a godly ſort*, flows from love to God; but there is no love to him in the ſoul, till by faith we are in ſome degree perſuaded of his reconciliation to us in Chriſt. Hence we find true repentance deſcribed in ſcripture as following a gracious change: *After*

* Matt. iv. 17.

After that I was turned, I repented *. Now there is no turning to the Lord but by faith. When he draws us, we by faith come unto him. Likewiſe, in ſcripture, when the bleſſings of the new Covenant are deſcribed, the Lord is firſt repreſented as giving a new heart and new ſpirit to ſinners; and then it is ſaid, *they ſhall loathe themſelves for their iniquities, and for their abominations* †. *Chriſt is exalted, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveneſs of ſins* ‡. We are therefore to ſeek both from him by faith.

III. We do not, however, affirm, that faith is firſt given, and repentance ſome time afterward. Though, in the nature of things, the one muſt go before the other, yet, the inſtant in which a ſinner truly believes in Chriſt, he repents of his ſins in a right manner. And we do likewiſe acknowledge, that ſome kind of repentance muſt go before faith. The ſinner muſt ſee that his ſin is deſtroying him, before he thinks of applying to the Saviour. But this repentance is no diſtinguiſhing character of the people of God. It is ſuch a repentance as is found in many who periſh; and would be found in all of them, if their conſciences were awakened.

IV. We teſtify againſt thoſe who teach, that we may not come to Chriſt, nor truſt in him for ſalvation, till we have firſt repented of our ſins. This doctrine entangles the conſciences of men, and tends to diſcourage them from coming to Chriſt; ſince, according to it, they muſt firſt know that their repentance is true, before they may venture to truſt in him. It is irrational, as it is, upon the matter, a directing men firſt to heal themſelves, and then to go to the phyſician. It is contrary to the ſcripture, which directs ſinners to go by faith to Chriſt for all they need; and which repreſents them as firſt looking to him *who was wounded for* their *tranſgreſſions*, and then *mourning after a godly ſort* ‖.

ARTICLE XV. *Of the Freedom of Believers from the Law as a Covenant.*

I. WE declare that believers in Chriſt are delivered from the law as a covenant of works; he having fulfilled

* Jer. xxxi. 19.
† Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 31.
‡ Acts v. 31.
‖ Zech. xii. 10.

it in their ſtead, and redeemed them from its curſe. No ſooner do they become by faith intereſted in him, than they are delivered from its commanding power; ſo as they are no more under an obligation to obey its precepts with this deſign, that, by their obedience, they may merit eternal life; and from its condemning power, ſo that their ſins do not any more render them liable to the death it threatens. If they were under its commanding, they would be alſo under its condemning power; for *it is written, Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them* *. Believers are not perfect in that holineſs and righteouſneſs of life, which the law requires; they do not continue in all things which it commands; to do them with that purity of heart, ardency of love to God, and ſingle regard to his glory, which it requires. Therefore, if under the commanding power of the law as a covenant, they would be under its curſe.

II. The Spirit of God has taught us, that they who truly believe in Chriſt, are no more *under the law;* they being *dead* to it, and it to them. It would be blaſphemy to underſtand this of the law as a rule of righteouſneſs: believers are not *without law to God, but under the law to Chriſt* †. The exceeding riches of grace manifeſted in their ſalvation, inſtead of weakening, ſtrengthens their obligations to love and ſerve God. They *are dead to the law*, not that they may wallow in ſin, as the ſwine in the mire; but that they *may live unto God:* Now, this living unto him is a living according to his holy law. Every tranſgreſſion of this law is in itſelf worthy of death: and believers being always in this life imperfect in holineſs, and often chargeable with very grievous iniquities; if God *ſhould enter into judgment* with them according to their works, they *could not ſtand* in his ſight. Their ſafety does not lie in this, that they commit no iniquity, or that their iniquities are ſo ſmall that God will not count theſe worthy of death; but in this, that God will not *mark iniquity againſt them;* all their ſins, both before and after the day of their effectual calling, having been laid on Chriſt, and taken away by him.

III. The law from which believers in Chriſt are ſet free, cannot be merely the ceremonial law; for this deliverance

* Gal. iii. 10. † 1 Cor. ix. 21.

liverance is mentioned as the peculiar privilege of believers in Chriſt: but it might have been ſaid to the whole Gentile world, ſaints and ſinners, *ye are not under the* ceremonial law. It is alſo a privilege common to all believers; but thoſe of the Gentiles who believed in Chriſt, never needed deliverance from the ceremonial law, for this plain reaſon, that they were never under it. They who *are not under the law* are *under grace*; but millions not under the ceremonial law are *under the curſe. They who are dead to the law, live unto God, and ſin has no more the dominion over them* *. But many to whom the ceremonial law never extended, are enemies of righteouſneſs, children of the devil, and ſervants of ſin. By the coming of Chriſt, the ceremonial law was no longer binding: the deſign of it being anſwered, it ceaſed. The Church was then called to behold Chriſt, not through a vail of ceremonies, but as *evidently ſet forth crucified*; and to behold not the *ſhadows of good things to come*, but the good things themſelves; which *many prophets and righteous men had deſired to ſee, but ſaw not.* The diſperſion of the Jews, and the deſtruction of the Temple, rendered the obſervation of the ceremonial law as impracticable as it was uſeleſs. It may now be ſaid to the whole world, *ye are not under the* ceremonial *law*; but does the infallible conſequence of that deliverance from the law, concerning which the Apoſtle ſpeaks, belong to all? May it be ſaid to men without exception, *Ye are under grace, and ſin ſhall not have dominion over you?* Verily, no.

IV. The law from which believers are delivered, is that law by which neither they, nor any one living, can be juſtified in the ſight of God; and this cannot be merely the ceremonial law; for it is the law according to which all moral actions are tried. Juſtification by it, and juſtification by grace, are conſidered as directly oppoſite the one to the other; and theſe two are repreſented, in ſcripture, as comprehending every ſuppoſable way in which men may be juſtified. It muſt be *by the works of the law*, or *by grace*; and if one is juſtified, *not by the works of the law*, the ſcripture has taught us to conclude that he is *juſtified by grace.* But if the ceremonial law only were meant, the ſcripture reaſoning would be very defective; as a third way of ſeeking juſtification, *viz.* by obedience

* Rom. vi. 11. 14.

obedience to the moral law as a covenant of works, would remain unnoticed. The doctrine of juſtification by works is in nowiſe rejected by aſſerting, that the ceremonial law is of no more uſe; that we are not under it; and that we ought not to expect acceptance before God on account of our obedience to what it enjoined.

V. The law from which believers in Chriſt are ſet free, is that by which the unbelieving Jews ſought righteouſneſs; and this was not merely the ceremonial law. Blind as theſe Jews were, they did not expect that they would be juſtified by their obedience to the ceremonial inſtitutions only. Their error was, that they did not conſider theſe as directing them to the Redeemer; but as ſhewing them how they might obtain eternal life by their own works. Thus they confounded the ceremonial inſtitutions with the moral law in its covenant-form; and imagined, that, by ſuch an obedience as they could give to the whole of the moral and ceremonial precepts God had enjoined, they would be juſtified. The young man who came to our Lord, enquiring *what good thing he ſhould do, that he might inherit eternal life* *, had been ſeeking it in the ſame way as the other unconverted Jews; and he had been ſeeking it by obedience, not to the ceremonial law only, but to the moral. Paul, in his epiſtles, frequently ſpeaks of the law as comprehending both the moral and ceremonial precepts; becauſe, among the Jews, the word *law* was commonly underſtood in that comprehenſive ſenſe; and becauſe, though the ceremonial inſtitutions belonged to the goſpel, as they ſerved to manifeſt Chriſt, and to lead ſinners to him; yet obedience to them was enjoined by that law firſt given to man, which is full and perfect, requiring obedience to God in all things which he ſhall command.

VI. The firſt adverſaries of Chriſtianity did not miſtake the ſenſe of Paul's words, though they calumniated his doctrine: they ſaid, he made *void the law*, and taught men to *continue in ſin*. Now, as the ceremonial law preſcribed the times and manner of worſhip in the Jewiſh Church; not thoſe moral duties which belong to the law as it extends to all men; they would not have had even a pretence for their accuſations, had he only taught that men were not juſtified by their obedience to it, and were not

* Matt. xix. 16.

not under it. The ground of their quarrel againſt him evidently was, his teaching, that free grace abounds to ſinners through Jeſus Chriſt; and that *they are ſaved, not by works of righteouſneſs which* they *have done* in obedience to any law, but according to the mercy of God. The reproaches caſt on his doctrine were the very ſame with thoſe caſt on the doctrine of free grace at this preſent time. Our cauſe is the ſame with his, and our enemies borrow the weapons of their warfare from the ſame lying ſpirit as his did. And Paul's anſwer ſhows us, what reply we ſhould make to ſuch. He did not tell them, that they quite miſtook the ſenſe of his words; that in teaching the freedom of believers from the law, and in warning all againſt the vain attempt of ſeeking life by it, he meant the ceremonial law only: no, he aſſerted and vindicated the doctrine of free grace through Jeſus Chriſt. *Do we*, ſays he, *make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we eſtabliſh the law* *. How did he eſtabliſh it? By preaching Chriſt as fulfilling it in our place; as redeeming us from its curſe, and thus *redeeming us from all iniquity, that he might purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of* thoſe *good works* which the law requires. The Lord forming his people for himſelf, according to the holineſs repreſented in his law, they ſhew forth his praiſe by conformity to it in their heart and life. We do not make void, but eſtabliſh the law, while we declare it to be magnified by the perfect obedience of our Lord Jeſus; while we adhere to it as the unalterable rule of righteouſneſs, every tranſgreſſion of which, if not ſatisfied for by a Surety, muſt be puniſhed in the ſinner; and while we maintain, that conformity to it is a chief part of our ſalvation, holineſs being eſſential to happineſs. We, therefore, teſtify againſt all who teach, that believers are ſtill under the law as a covenant of works, or that the law from which they are, in ſcripture, ſaid to be delivered, is no other than the ceremonial law.

ARTICLE XVI. *Of the Motives and Ends of acceptable Obedience.*

I. WE believe that the hope of reward and fear of puniſhment are not to the true Chriſtian, the chief motives of

* Rom. iii. 31.

of obedience. The love of Chriſt conſtraineth him to live, not unto himſelf, but unto that Redeemer who died for him and roſe again. The love of God being manifeſted to us in Chriſt, we love him who firſt loved us. We love his commandments, we love his ſervice; and are moved by love to him, rather than by ſelf-intereſt, to do thoſe things which are pleaſing in his ſight. The obedience, of which the chief motives are the fear of hell and hope of reward, is not acceptable to God; becauſe it is not a ſerving of him *in newneſs of ſpirit*.

II. As love to God is the chief motive, ſo the glory of his name is the chief or higheſt end of acceptable obedience. The law requires, that, as the glory of God is the moſt worthy and important end we can have in view, ſo we ſhould make it our chief end in all our actions: *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart* *. *This is the firſt, and* it is the *great commandment.* The Lord never did, and never will require leſs of any than what is expreſſed in this commandment. He will not give his glory to another; and therefore will never allow that we ſhould prefer our ſelf-intereſt, or any thing elſe to it. But he has wiſely and graciouſly ordered, that in ſeeking his glory, we ſhall find our true intereſt: he bids not any ſerve him in vain. He is not, and will not be a debtor to us. We can add nothing to him. We may declare and ſhew forth, we cannot increaſe his glory. Our ſervices, when acceptably performed, do, through his bleſſing, profit ourſelves, they cannot profit him.

III. We, therefore, condemn the following propoſitions: 1. That the fear of puniſhment and the hope of reward are the chief motives of obedience to a true Chriſtian. 2. That our ſelf-intereſt or happineſs is the chief or higheſt end of all virtuous and religious actions. Theſe opinions are contrary to the ſcriptures, which teach us, that we ought to ſerve God from love, as children do a father; not from fear, as ſlaves do a taſk-maſter: that, loving him above all things, we ſhould not be influenced in his ſervice by ſelfiſh conſiderations; and that, *whether we eat or drink, or whatſoever we do,* we ſhould *do all to the glory of God* †.

ARTICLE

* Mark xii. 30. † 1 Cor. x. 31.

ARTICLE XVII. *Of the Work of the* HOLY SPIRIT.

I. WE believe, that there is no inclination or motion towards any thing truly good, but an utter averſion to it in fallen men; till the Holy Spirit begins a ſpecial and gracious work in them. The elect are, by nature, diſobedient as well as others, and as obſtinate in their diſobedience as any. The power which brings them to Chriſt, and ſubdues them to the obedience of faith, muſt be almighty and irreſiſtible in its operations. They, as others, ſay, *We will not come:* the Lord ſays, *Ye ſhall come:* and the exceeding greatneſs of divine power makes them to yield. All that can be ſaid concerning the goodneſs of God, the bleſſedneſs of them who truſt in him, and the miſery of thoſe who reject his counſel, though ſaid in the moſt engaging, affecting, and perſuaſive manner poſſible, will be addreſſed to ſinners in vain, unleſs the quickening Spirit awakes them to hear it.

II. Though the Spirit draws ſinners by an irreſiſtible power, yet not by violence. He overcomes their obſtinacy in a moſt ſweet gracious manner. He opens the ears to hear his voice; he opens the eyes to ſee *the exceeding riches of the grace of God, manifeſted in his kindneſs towards us through Chriſt Jeſus;* he opens the heart to receive the truth in love. Thus, the rebellious ſinner becomes all willingneſs. He is overcome or perſuaded by what may be called divine arguments. A divine light ſhines into his mind; and it has a transforming influence upon him: he is renewed in the whole man after the image of God. Seeing acceſs to God through Jeſus Chriſt, and being heartily pleaſed with God's everlaſting Covenant of mercy, he acquieſces in it as all his ſalvation; as comprehending all he deſires.

III. This change, called in ſcripture a *being born again*, is different, not merely in the degrees of it, but in the very nature of it, from any change which may be effected by the common operations of the Spirit on ſuch as continue in unbelief. Believers are *created again in Chriſt Jeſus;* others are not. They know Chriſt, however imperfectly; others know him not. They love him; others hate him. They are the children of God; others are the children of the wicked one. They are made light in the Lord; others are darkneſs. They hate ſin; others love

love it. They obey God; others are in rebellion againſt him. This change is not gradual, but inſtantaneous: all either have or have not paſſed from death to life; none are in a middle ſtate. Theſe convictions which may go before converſion, cannot properly be called a preparation for it; as they are of the very ſame kind with the convictions which may be found in thoſe who periſh.

IV. The Spirit of God works by the word; therefore the ſpirit which leads men into opinions not taught in the word, and which does not teach them to conſider the word as *a light to their feet*, as their guide and their counſellor, and which moves them to deſpiſe and ſpeak lightly of the word, is not the Holy Spirit of God, but the enemy of mankind leading them captive at his pleaſure.

V. We teſtify againſt thoſe who teach, that there is a common grace given to thoſe who are not ſaved, different only in degree, not in kind, from that grace given to the regenerate, by which they are enabled to believe, love, and obey God. This opinion evidently leads to deny that there is ſuch a thing as diſtinguiſhing grace; or any favour beſtowed on thoſe who are ſaved, for which they ought to thank God, as his peculiar gift to them. We alſo teſtify againſt the blaſphemy of thoſe, on the one hand, who, pretending to hold by the word, deny and ridicule the work of the Spirit in opening it up, and applying it to the hearers of the goſpel; and that of thoſe, on the other hand, who, under pretence of magnifying the work of the Spirit, deſpiſe and neglect the word, by which he works in renewing and calling ſinners, and in preparing believers for *the inheritance of the ſaints in light*.

ARTICLE XVIII. *Of the Perſeverance of the Saints.*

I. WE believe, that the Lord will never leave nor forſake any of his ſaints, ſo as they ſhall totally or finally fall from that bleſſed ſtate into which he brought them in the day of their converſion. He puts his *fear in their hearts*, and he will preſerve it there. They are received into his family, to abide in it for ever. They are *heirs to an inheritance*, not only *incorruptible* in itſelf, but reſerved in heaven for them; who are *kept by the power of God through faith unto* that *ſalvation ready to be revealed in the laſt*

laſt time; when they ſhall enter on the full poſſeſſion of this inheritance. They are united to Chriſt, members of his ſpiritual body, and ſhall never be ſeparated from it: he will preſent it entire to God, ſaying, *Behold I and the children whom God hath given me; and none of them is loſt but the ſon of perdition, that the ſcripture might be fulfilled. The Father* who gave them to Chriſt *is greater than all:* and none is *able to pluck them out of his Father's hand.* Their Redeemer is alſo God mighty to ſave, and declares *they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of* his *hand* *. The love of God did not fix on them, becauſe of any thing good in them. And it will not be taken from them, becauſe of any evil in them. The Lord will, indeed, *viſit their tranſgreſſions with the rod; and their iniquity with ſtripes:* But he will not puniſh them as a judge executing the ſentence of the law on criminals: he will, as a Father, correct them only *for their profit.*

II. This doctrine belongs to thoſe conſolations of God which are neither few nor ſmall. The ſong put in the mouth of his ſaints, has this note in it, *The mercy of the Lord endureth for ever:* and each of them may ſay, *I will ſing of the mercies of the Lord for ever.* That this doctrine tends to make the ſaints negligent in the ſtudy of holineſs, and even to encourage them in wickedneſs, is one of the reproaches deviſed and ſpread by the enemy of all truth and righteouſneſs. The faith of the Lord's unchangeable love, expreſſed towards us by his bringing us unto his everlaſting Covenant, is a moſt powerful motive to the ſtudy of holineſs. It is when believers, failing in the exerciſe of faith, forget this love, that they fall into ſin.

III. We do, therefore, teſtify againſt thoſe who deny the perſeverance of the ſaints, as guilty of wreſting the ſcripture. In it we read of ſome who once appeared to be ſaints, manifeſting themſelves to be what they always were, enemies to God, and ſtill *in the gall of bitterneſs and bond of iniquity.* We read of ſome ſaints who fell into very grievous ſins; yet the Lord did not utterly take his Holy Spirit from them, nor ſuffer their faith to fail; but we never read of any who once were, and afterwards ceaſed to be ſaints. They are all *in the hand of* their gracious *Lord,* who has promiſed that *he will preſerve them from all evil;* that *he will preſerve their ſoul,* and that *he will*

* John x. 28.

preſerve them for ever. If he did not keep them, none of them would perſevere in the way to heaven.

ARTICLE XIX. *Of the Imperfection of the Saints in this Life.*

I. WE acknowledge that all the ſaints are imperfect in this life. So much ſin cleaves to their beſt ſervices, that no one action any of them ever did could be approved, if tried by the pure holy law of God. A body of death preſſes them down to the duſt. Of this they are moſt deeply ſenſible, when the Lord makes the light of his countenance ſhine moſt brightly on their ſouls. It is then, each of them cries with exceeding earneſtneſs, *O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death* *? And it is then that, thanking God who *giveth* them *the victory*, they *preſs*, with the greateſt ardour, *toward the mark for the prize of* their *high calling.*

II. We do, therefore, condemn the pride and blaſphemy of them who ſay they are perfect, and are not, but are liars. While they ſay, *they have no ſin, they deceive themſelves, and the truth is not in them.* By their preſumptuous boaſting, we may know that they are not of God; and that they know neither the holineſs of his law, nor the corruption of their own hearts. They carry a mark of their Antichriſtian extraction on their forehead, and are ſelf-deceivers. *Becauſe they received not the love of the truth, that they might be ſaved; God hath ſent them ſtrong deluſion, that they ſhould believe a lie* †.

ARTICLE XX. *Of the Eternity of Puniſhment.*

WE believe what the Lord hath moſt expreſsly declared, *that the wicked ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction* ‡. They can make no proper ſatisfaction by their ſufferings, for the offences they have committed, againſt the infinitely holy Creator and Lord of the univerſe. Beſides, their wickedneſs, continuing in full ſtrength, they are under their ſufferings ſinning ſtill more. *Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of ſalvation* §! They will be miſerably deceived who expect

* Rom. vii. 24, 25.
† 2 Theſ. ii. 10, 11.
‡ 2 Theſ. i. 9.
§ 2 Cor. vi. 2.

pect another ſuch time, another ſuch day of ſalvation on the other ſide of death. As the tree falleth, ſo it muſt lie. Thoſe who die in their ſins, will remain under the curſe for ever. They *ſhall be caſt out into outer darkneſs.* No ray of hope will alleviate their torments: *their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.* We do therefore teſtify againſt the opinion of thoſe who formerly taught, and of thoſe who now teach, that the wicked will, at length, be redeemed from the torments of hell; as plainly contrary to the word of God, and extremely pernicious to the ſouls of men.

PART THIRD.

Concerning the Order of the Church of Chriſt.

ARTICLE I. *Of Separation from corrupt Churches.*

I. WE believe it not only lawful, but expedient, to ſeparate from a church which is not merely corrupt, but obſtinate in apoſtaſy; and eſpecially from a church which is daily proceeding from one degree of it to another. We are commanded to *withdraw from every brother that walketh diſorderly* *. If *from every brother*, certainly from a church or ſociety of brethren who walk ſo. That there may be a walking diſorderly with reſpect to our profeſſion, is plain from the charge which Paul brought againſt Peter, and thoſe other Jews who aſſembled with him, about the neceſſity of adhering to the ceremonial law. Obſerving their diſſimulation about an article of the doctrine of Chriſt, which they would not avow for fear of offending certain Jews; Paul declared *that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the goſpel* †: and if they had perſevered in this diſorderly walking, the rule before mentioned, which the Spirit directed him to give the Church of Chriſt, would have obliged him to withdraw from them.

II. If it is objected, that there were many diſorders, much of the leaven of corrupt doctrine, and not a few

 ſcandalous

* 2 Theſ. iii. 6. † Gal. ii. 14.

ſcandalous perſons in the churches of Corinth, Galatia, Thyatira, and others mentioned in the New Teſtament; and yet we do not find that any Chriſtians ſeparated from them: We anſwer, that ſuch evils entering in o a church, do, by no means, warrant us inſtantly to forſake it, and form ourſelves into a new church-ſtate. It is our duty, firſt, to labour, as the Lord gives us ability and opportunity, for a reformation of abuſes; and, in this, we ought to be patient, as well as earneſt. None of the churches referred to in the objection, had, for a long ſeries of years, perſiſted in error and diſorder, contemning all warnings and teſtimonies againſt their corruptions. The evils complained of in them were moſtly ſuch as had entered and ſpread through the negligence of church-members; not ſuch as were perſevered in and defended by the Church as a body. The church of Corinth, though very diſorderly, was not obſtinate. By a compariſon of the firſt and ſecond epiſtles of Paul to that church, it appears that his exhortations wrought a conſiderable reformation upon it. And we may reaſonably conclude, that the admonitions given to other churches mentioned, produced the like effects upon them. If they did not, the only way for the faithful to eſcape the plagues threatened, as the juſt puniſhment of theſe churches, if they ſhould perſevere in apoſtaſy, was to *come out from among them, and be ſeparate.* And truly, had a number of upright zealous Chriſtians ſeparated from the ſuperſtition, the corrupt doctrines, and the human inventions, which ſoon after the death of the Apoſtles, ſtained the glory of the primitive churches; the teſtimony of Jeſus had never been ſo much loſt and buried as it was under the reign of Antichriſt. The Lord, in his adorable wiſdom and ſovereignty, ordered it otherwiſe: but it is plain that it would have been the duty of Chriſtians, firſt, to have teſtified againſt the corruptions which crept into the primitive churches; and if their teſtimony had been deſpiſed, and of none effect, as to removing the evils againſt which they teſtified, then it would have been their duty to have withdrawn from backſliders who refuſed to return. Thus the conduct of Chriſtians, in the early ages of Chriſtianity, is ſo far from being a convincing argument with us, to continue in the communion of churches, after they are become very corrupt, and refuſe to return from the evil of

their

their ways; that we may juſtly conſider it as furniſhing us with an affecting example of the danger of continuing in the communion of ſuch churches.

III. If our ſentiments reſpecting ſeparation from corrupt churches, ſeem more narrow than thoſe expreſſed by ſome eminent and worthy men, who lived at or ſoon after the Reformation; their authority does not move us, while we have the word of God on our ſide. We deny, however, that any proper argument can be drawn from their principles or practice againſt us. In their time, the reformed churches were generally ſtudying to go forward in removing abuſes: and there was a reaſonable hope, that a more perfect reformation might be attained. But the caſe is now altered; the abuſes then generally acknowledged, and the removal of which was expected, are, many of them, defended and pled for, as worthy to be continued. The doctrine of the reformed church, then pure, is now grievouſly corrupted, and no hope of reformation remains; while the moſt part are, like Laodicea, ſaying, *I am rich and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing* *; and will not acknowledge their true character, which is the very reverſe, nor hearken to the counſel given them by the Lord Jeſus.

IV. We teſtify againſt thoſe who teach, that we ought not to ſeparate from any church, becauſe of its corruptions, and its obſtinacy in them; while we have juſt cauſe to believe that the ordinances of grace diſpenſed, are bleſſed of God, as means of ſaving ſinners, and edifying ſaints. This is as much as to ſay, that we ought not to ſeparate from a corrupt church, as long as we are not aſſured that we leave no righteous perſon behind us in it; that we muſt continue in it till we are aſſured that it is become wholly a ſynagogue of Satan; and that we muſt let a church-ſtate utterly periſh, before we take any effectual meaſures for reſtoring it. We teſtify alſo againſt thoſe who, hearkening to ſuch teachers, continue in communion with churches in which the truth is denied, its enemies not cenſured, and the teſtimony of ſuch as adhere to it ſuppreſſed or deſpiſed; eſpecially againſt thoſe who, after a door is opened, and a call given them, yet refuſe to come out from ſuch corrupt ſocieties.

* Rev. iii. 17, 18.

ARTICLE II. *Of Church-communion.*

I. WE declare that thoſe only ought to be admitted to the communion of the Church, who have a proper knowledge of the truth, make a faithful profeſſion of it, and whoſe converſation and practice become the goſpel.

II. Firſt, as the knowledge of God manifeſted to us in Chriſt is eſſentially neceſſary to the exerciſe of faith, repentance, love and new obedience; ſo the groſsly ignorant may be juſtly reckoned *wicked*; they *know not God*, and cannot *put their truſt in him*. They know not Chriſt; *how can they believe in him?* They know not the *truth*, how can they confeſs it? Not able to diſcern the bleſſings ſignified and repreſented to us in the ſacraments, they would only profane theſe holy ordinances, and hurt their own ſouls, by partaking of them. They are, therefore, to be excluded from the communion of the Church, till they be inſtructed concerning the Lord and Head of that ſociety, their own wretchedneſs, the riches of his grace, and the laws and ordinances of his houſe. What meaſure of knowledge may be abſolutely neceſſary to render perſons fit for admiſſion, cannot be very particularly determined: only it muſt be ſuch as, according to the word of God, is eſſential to the exerciſe of faith in him as reconciled to us in Chriſt. Due conſideration is to be had of the natural abilities of different perſons, of the opportunities which have been afforded them for receiving inſtruction, and of the capacity they have to expreſs what they know.

III. Secondly, a faithful profeſſion of the truth is neceſſary to give perſons a right of admiſſion to the communion of the Church. The Lord alone, who knoweth the hearts of all, knows whether mens profeſſion is ſincere as to the motives of it; but the Church may know whether it be according to the word as to the matter of it; that is, whether it be full, particular, and open;—*Full*, no part of the teſtimony of Jeſus deſignedly left out;—*Particular*, in direct oppoſition to the perverters and deſpiſers of the truth; and *Open*, the perſons making it, declaring a readineſs to avow it before the world, notwithſtanding any reproach and hardſhip they may be expoſed to in maintaining it. The Lord requires ſuch a profeſſion to be made by his people, that their unity may be known; that

that they may *ſtrive together for the faith of the goſpel*, and that all may know his truth; it being thus by the Church held forth to the world, as a light is held forth in a candleſtick.

IV. All Church-members have not the ſame degree of knowledge: ſome are weak; ſome have had few helps and means for inſtruction; ſome may labour under prejudices which they cannot at once caſt off. Towards all ſuch, great tenderneſs ſhould be uſed. If they appear to be Chriſtians, are ſeeking farther inſtruction, and are not determined enemies to ſome article of truth or duty; they may, though labouring under difficulties about ſome part of the profeſſion which the Church makes, be received into its communion. But to receive thoſe into communion who are determined in their oppoſition to any part of that profeſſion the Church makes, or who are careleſs and wavering, not ſtudying to attain a more perfect knowledge and fixedneſs of mind about thoſe matters concerning which they are in doubt, would be to deſtroy, not to build, the houſe of God. The admiſſion of ſuch is the deſtruction of Chriſtian fellowſhip, among the members of a church. There can be no communion in prayers, in thankſgiving, in *ſtriving for the faith of the goſpel*, where there is no unity of *heart* and *mind* about that faith. When one is caſting down what another is building up, there may be the name, but there cannot be the truth, of Chriſtian communion.

V. It is not conſiſtent with faithfulneſs to God, to lay aſide, as ſome ſpeak, all theſe matters which have been debated among wiſe and good men; that by thus removing ſubjects of controverſy out of the way, there may be no occaſion of diſcord. This we may judge to be one of the moſt pernicious errors of the preſent time, and as plainly contrary to the word of God as any error which ever appeared in the Chriſtian Church. It puts the agreement of men, reputed wiſe and good, in the place of the ſcriptures of truth; making it, not them, our ſtandard: So that if ſome of this character deny any truth, though it ſhould be ever ſo plainly taught in the word of God, the Church muſt caſt it out of her public profeſſion. If this rule were to be obſerved, and all thoſe truths caſt aſide, which ſome men generally reputed wiſe and pious, have, at one time or another, denied and queſtioned,

little

little if any thing of Chriſtianity would be left remaining.

VI. Our Lord Jeſus hath, in the moſt plain and ſolemn manner, exhorted us to *take heed* and *obſerve all things whatſoever he hath commanded us*, and *to hold faſt what we have received* *. No where has he directed us to attend to the diſputes of the wiſe and pious, and to drop that as a matter of no importance about which they might differ. If the truth of the goſpel be perverted, it is no matter by whom. Whether the adverſary be a ſaint or a ſinner, is not our immediate buſineſs: We are to *contend earneſtly for the faith once delivered to the ſaints*, againſt thoſe who attack any part of it. If they are perſons of reputation for wiſdom and piety, we ought to conſider that this reputation will only give them the greater opportunity to draw away people after them. It was Peter's character, as an apoſtle and an eminent ſaint, which drew Barnabas and the other Jewiſh Chriſtians at Antioch along with him into diſſimulation. Moreover, we are not to be awed into ſilence at the appearance of eminent piety, in the oppoſers of the truth; ſeeing we are warned of *wolves that ſhall come in ſheeps clothing*, and of *Satan transforming himſelf into an angel of light*. Many adverſaries of the truth, who ſeem pious, are not ſo. And let them be what they will, if an *angel from heaven* ſhould teach any thing contrary *to the doctrine we have received of the Lord*, we ought to object his teſtimony with abhorrence.

VII. Thirdly, none ought to be admitted into the communion of the Church, whoſe life and converſation is not ſuch as becometh the goſpel. *The unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God*, and have no right to thoſe privileges which are peculiar to Chriſtians, ſuch as the ſacraments, the ſeals of the Covenant of Grace are; nor is it enough, that remarkably wicked and profane perſons are refuſed admiſſion: The careleſs who neglect commanded duty, who remember not the Lord's day to keep it holy, and who neglect to worſhip God in their families; as they are viſibly impenitent ſinners, they have no right to a place in that ſociety which ſhould conſiſt of ſuch only as viſibly, or, according to the judgment of charity, are ſaints.

VIII.

* Matt. xxix. 20. Rev. ii. 25.

VIII. The admiſſion of the viſibly wicked into the Church, is hurtful to other members of it. They cannot encourage and ſtrengthen others in the good ways of the Lord, but they will draw others into their own ſinful ways. It is likewiſe hurtful to themſelves: as it tends to confirm them in the pernicious deluſion, that they are Chriſtians, while they are not. Thus, in admitting them whoſe wickedneſs is viſible, office-bearers in the Church, beſides injuring it, act a moſt cruel part towards them; and become guilty of their blood, in ſo far as they do not give them faithful warning of their danger; but, on the contrary, harden them againſt all ſuch warnings, by receiving and acknowledging them as viſible Chriſtians. Such watchmen are chargeable with *ſaying, Peace, peace,* to thoſe to whom *there is no peace.*

IX. What we have aſſerted reſpecting the admiſſion of perſons to Church-communion, is nowiſe contrary to our Confeſſion of Faith; which declares that "ſaints by "profeſſion are bound to maintain an holy fellowſhip and "communion in the worſhip of God, and in performing "ſuch other ſervices as tend to their mutual edification:" Becauſe to enter into communion with the viſibly wicked, with the promoters of error, and with the lukewarm, who will not openly and faithfully appear in the cauſe of Chriſt; or to enter into communion with thoſe who are obſtinate in apoſtaſy from the truth received; would be no *holy fellowſhip*, and would tend to our mutual hurt. We would neglect our own duty, and encourage others to neglect theirs. That communion which our Confeſſion ſays "is to be extended to all who, in every place, call "on the name of the Lord Jeſus *," is intended of miniſtering to their outward neceſſities, as is evident to any who will conſider the texts of ſcripture referred to as proving that propoſition. Nothing is more plain than that the Weſtminſter Aſſembly, who framed that Confeſſion, did not mean, that every man who profeſſed to be a Chriſtian, ought to be admitted to the communion of the Church. Many parties profeſſing Chriſtianity were juſtly eſteemed by them as its worſt enemies. We do not, however, deny, that communion, in the fulleſt ſenſe, may be extended to all "who call on the name of the "Lord Jeſus," if that expreſſion is underſtood according to

* Confeſſ. chap. 26. ſect. 2.

to the ſcripture ſenſe of it; as ſignifying an upright profeſſion of the truth, a ſtedfaſt adherence to it, and a worſhipping of the Lord according to the appointed order; while the profeſſion made of receiving Chriſt is, ſo far as men can judge, manifeſted to be unfeigned, by a walking in him, ſtudying ſubmiſſion to his croſs, and obedience to all his commandments.

X. Believing the truths now declared, to be of great importance to the true peace and proſperity of the Church; we teſtify againſt that common pernicious opinion, that the matters about which men reputed wiſe and pious differ, ought not to be made terms of communion in the Chriſtian Church; and againſt the practice of thoſe who, acting on this principle, and finding they cannot agree about many articles of truth, do, as a Church, agree to lay aſide a public and joint teſtimony for them; and thus, as a Church, do what they can to bury them. We do alſo teſtify againſt the practice of thoſe who admit the ignorant, the careleſs, and the profane, to the communion of the Church. This evil hath done ſo much hurt already, that all who wiſh well to the intereſts of religion ſhould the more earneſtly oppoſe it. He muſt be *a ſtranger in our Iſrael* who does not know, that one leading cauſe of the apoſtaſy now prevailing in the Reformed Churches, has been the want of due ſtrictneſs and care in admitting perſons into their communion. The *little leaven* has almoſt *leavened the whole lump*. The careleſs and corrupt, once admitted, have quickly opened a door to others of their own character. We do alſo teſtify againſt what ſome call *occaſional communion*; by which they mean the admiſſion of people into their religious fellowſhip for a time, whom they do not reckon qualified to continue in it. We have neither precept nor example in the word of God authoriſing ſuch a practice. It is manifeſtly abſurd: We can reaſonably admit none to communion at one time, who, while they abide in the ſame faith and practice, may not be continued in our communion.

ARTICLE III. *Of Excommunication.*

I. WE believe that the Lord will bleſs no cenſures which he has not appointed in his Church; and alſo that no Church can proſper, if it deſpiſe thoſe cenſures which he

he has appointed, or if it neglect the application of them when neceſſary. Perſons who give offence, are to be excluded from communion till they give credible evidence of their repentance and amendment. But if the offence is very great, or if the offending perſon is obſtinate, and will hear no admonition, he ought to be entirely caſt out of the Church; which laſt ſentence is commonly called the *greater*, as the former is called the *leſſer excommunication*.

II. The ends for which very grievous or obſtinate offenders are to be caſt out of the Church, are theſe: Firſt, Its preſervation. This is the appointed way to deliver it from the pernicious influence of ſuch as perſevere in error, or in apoſtaſy from the truth which they had formerly profeſſed to receive, or who are grievouſly ſcandalous in their practice. Secondly, The good of thoſe who are thus caſt out. This cenſure rightly applied, is a due and proper teſtimony againſt their ſin, and, therefore, an appointed mean of bringing them to repentance.

III. The greater excommunication is no more than a caſting out of the Church, or a judicial declaring the offender no more of that ſociety. The *delivering to Satan*, by which excommunication is ſometimes expreſſed in ſcripture *, means nothing more than a caſting out of the viſible kingdom of Chriſt, into the ſociety compoſed of the reſt of the world, who are deſcribed as Satan's viſible kingdom, and among whom he rules, though not without control. *The deſtruction of the fleſh*, mentioned in ſcripture as an end of excommunication, is the deſtruction of thoſe luſts and corruptions which are often called in ſcripture *the fleſh*, and are oppoſed to the Spirit or renewed man. In the preſent divided ſtate of the Church, thoſe whom one denomination of Chriſtians caſt out are often received by another; but ſurely when we caſt out one from our communion, we do, upon the matter, declare that no other Church, if it were what it ought to be, and acted as it ought to act, would receive him; that he ought to be conſidered by every Chriſtian as *an heathen*, or one who deſerves no place in the viſible Church of Chriſt, till he manifeſts his repentance.

IV.

* 1 Cor. v. 5.

IV. In excommunication, we have nothing to do with the ſtate of perſons before God, but with their behaviour in the Church. It is not neceſſary to delay excommunication till the offending perſon give evident ſigns of his being *in the gall of bitterneſs and bond of iniquity*. The matter to be conſidered is, whether or not, according to the word of God, he deſerves that cenſure. We doubt not but real Chriſtians may, in ſome inſtances, prove ſuch troublers of the Church, and ſuch pernicious members of it, that it is neceſſary to cut them off from its ſociety. All due tenderneſs, however, ſhould be uſed towards offenders. No marks of raſhneſs and anger ſhould appear in our proceedings againſt them. We ought, as far as poſſible, to manifeſt to them that it is not hatred towards them, but a regard to the welfare of the Church, and a deſire to reclaim them, which move us to cenſure them.

V. The adding of civil pains and penalties to excommunication, is a ſcandalous abuſe of this ſpiritual ordinance; and a remnant of Antichriſtian tyranny, which was retained too long in ſome Proteſtant countries, and is retained in others to this day. We teſtify againſt this and every other abuſe of that cenſure; as alſo, againſt them who deny that it may be applied to any offenders, except thoſe whoſe wickedneſs is abſolutely inconſiſtent with their being real Chriſtians. If this opinion was juſt, men might trouble the Church and pervert its members ever ſo long, and yet we might never venture to caſt them out of it, not having poſitive evidence of their being in an unregenerate ſtate.

ARTICLE IV. *Of Confeſſions of Faith.*

I. WE declare, that a confeſſion of faith, or ſome public declaration of the principles of a church, is neceſſary to its well-being. The Church of Chriſt is bound to teſtify to the world what is her faith and practice; that ſuch as would learn, may have an opportunity; that ſuch as are diſpoſed to enter into her communion, may know into what kind of ſociety they are entering; and that ſhe herſelf may be aſſured of the ſound mind of ſuch as ſhe receives, by their adherence to that declaration or confeſſion of the faith of Chriſt made in his Church. An acknowledgment of the ſcriptures, as the word of God, the only

only rule of faith and practice, would be abundantly ſufficient for this purpoſe; if the ſcripture-doctrines were oppoſed by none but Jews, Pagans, Mahometans, and other avowed enemies of Chriſtianity. But we know that, as formerly, ſo now, many, profeſſing to receive the ſcriptures, wreſt them ſometimes to their own hurt, ſometimes to their own deſtruction. It is neceſſary, that we ſhould teſtify plainly againſt ſuch; declaring, that we do not underſtand the ſcriptures, according to their perverſe apprehenſions about what is contained in them: and, as we would be found faithful to the Lord in keeping his truth pure and entire among us, we ought to enquire of thoſe who aſk admiſſion into our communion, Whether they do underſtand the ſcriptures in that ſenſe which we judge the mind of the Holy Spirit? Without ſome public joint confeſſion of the faith, there would be no keeping out the worſt heretic that ever appeared, bearing the Chriſtian name, from communion with us. Yet the ſuffering of ſuch to enter into our religious fellowſhip, or to continue in it, is a ſin for which the Lord reproves churches otherwiſe commendable; as appears from the epiſtles to thoſe of Pergamus and Thyatira *.

II. Confeſſions of faith may be, and often are wreſted by the adverſaries of truth: and when they are ſo, it becomes neceſſary to declare the doctrine of Chriſt, as it ſtands in oppoſition to new errors, or to old errors in a new dreſs. The confeſſion of the Church needs not, by ſuch new declarations, to be enlarged, ſo as to render it more perplexing and burdenſome for Chriſtians to underſtand it. The truth maintained againſt former errors, we ought ſtill to hold faſt. But when errors are either extinct, or nearly ſo, and when there is no apparent danger of their being revived; there is not ſuch a neceſſity of enlarging on the truth which ſtands in oppoſition to them, as when they were in high repute and daily ſpreading. The errors which have troubled the Church in former and later times, are indeed materially the ſame; and the truth to be teſtified for againſt them is the ſame; only it ought to be ſtated in ſuch a manner, as, by it, we may condemn the errors of our time, and expreſs our adherence to the ſcripture, in oppoſition to the preſent perverters or neglecters of it.

* Rev. ii. 12. and 18.

III. Confeſſions of faith are no impoſitions on the conſcience, except when men in power force others to receive ſuch a confeſſion of faith as has been framed for them; threatening and employing fines, impriſonment, and other penalties, if they refuſe. This is a compelling of men to come into the Church, by means entirely oppoſite to the ſpirit of the goſpel. The goſpel compels; but it does ſo, only by exhorting, intreating and perſuading. The abuſe of confeſſions of faith is to be lamented and condemned; but it ſays no more againſt the neceſſity and uſefulneſs of them, than the abuſe of the ſcriptures does againſt the divine original of thoſe ſacred oracles.

IV. We do therefore teſtify againſt all, who being enemies to a public joint confeſſion of the faith in the Church, would have the door ſet open to the worſt heretics, and the moſt dreadful perverters of the ſcripture to enter into it. Such often decry confeſſions of faith, pretending they do it from a regard to the ſcripture; but they take a very improper way to expreſs their regard to it, while they oppoſe what is ſo neceſſary for preſerving the ſcripture-doctrine, and for oppoſing its adverſaries. Moreover, it is no breach of charity to ſay, that the regard many ſuch expreſs for the ſcripture, is feigned; ſeeing we find them inſiſting on little elſe in their diſcourſes and writings, than thoſe duties which the light of nature diſcovers to us, but which it does not afford us ſtrength to perform.

ARTICLE V. *Of public Covenanting.*

I. WE have already declared, that public ſolemn covenanting by a church, is not merely lawful, but, when the Lord gives an opportunity to ſet forward in it, exceeding uſeful for promoting the intereſts of religion. The reaſons which convince us that this is a duty, are theſe: Firſt, The divine command to *vow unto the Lord*; which cannot be reſtrained to a private vowing to him, any more than the command given us to pray to him, can be reſtrained to a doing ſo in ſecret. Secondly, The practice of the Iſraelitiſh Church; whoſe covenanting cannot be conſidered as any part of their obedience to the ceremonial law, now aboliſhed. It was neither commanded in that law, nor did it reſpect the obſervation of ceremonial inſtitutions;

tions; but chiefly that obedience to God, that adherence to his truth, and that uprightneſs in walking before him, which are as much our duty as that of any former generation. Whatever difference circumſtances may render neceſſary between covenanting, as practiſed by the Old and by the New-Teſtament Church, the duty is ſtill the ſame: it was not a ſhadow of good things to come; but was neceſſary then, and is neceſſary now, as an appointed mean of maintaining purity, zeal, and ſtedfaſtneſs among Church-members. We have alſo reaſon to conclude, that a public ſolemn engagement to abide by the truth, and to aſſiſt each other in promoting it, was intended, when it is ſaid of ſome New-Teſtament churches, *that they gave their ownſelves to the Lord* *. This giving of themſelves to the Lord, was diſtinct from the profeſſion they had made at their firſt entrance into the Chriſtian Church. The engagements they came under, by joining together in the ſacrament of the Lord's Supper, could not be intended; elſe what they did, would not have been more than the Apoſtles expected. Thirdly, The ſcripture prophecies and promiſes ſhew it to be a duty; and alſo a duty which ſhall be attended to, and practiſed with ſucceſs in New-Teſtament times. *The Egyptians*, it is ſaid, *ſhall know the Lord in that day, and ſhall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it* †; that is, ſuch as were of old, enemies to the Church, and aliens from it, ſhall, in the day of the enlargement of Chriſt's kingdom, ſolemnly avouch the Lord to be their God, and engage by covenant to ſerve him. Though ſacrificing to the Lord is mentioned, in ſome Old Teſtament prophecies, along with vowing and ſwearing to him, we are not to ſuppoſe that theſe laſt, like the former, are only figurative expreſſions of what was to happen in New-Teſtament times; ſeeing it can never be proved that they were types of things to come, any more than the knowledge of God, and prayer to him, which are mentioned in the ſame prophecies. Nor is it foretold in one paſſage only, that this duty ſhould be obſerved in the New-Teſtament Church, but in ſeveral; as when it is ſaid, *Men ſhall ſwear*, not merely *by the Lord*, but *to* him; that they *ſhall ſubſcribe with the hand* ‡ *unto him*; and that they *ſhall join themſelves to*

* 2 Cor. viii. 5.
† Iſa. xix. 21.
‡ Iſa. xliv. 5.

him in a perpetual covenant, that ſhall not be forgotten *. All which promiſes have a ſpecial reſpect to that diſpenſation of grace which we live under.

II. Vowing to God is a reaſonable ſervice. If we may lawfully engage by oath, as is generally allowed, to maintain a civil cauſe, much more to maintain the cauſe of God. If we may ſwear allegiance to a civil government, may we not, with ſtill greater propriety, ſwear to be faithful to the ſupreme Governor and Judge of all the earth? The profeſſion of the faith is ſuch, as we can never make too openly and ſolemnly. The engagements we are under to the Lord, cannot be avowed in too direct a manner. The duty we owe to each other as to our civil intereſts, is, in various inſtances, engaged to by oath; and, doubtleſs, we may lawfully ſo engage ourſelves to the religious duties we owe one to another.

III. Covenanting has been practiſed, though not always in the ſame manner, by moſt of the reformed churches, ſome time or other. Something of this kind is eſſential to the very being of a church; as the members of it muſt more or leſs explicitly acknowledge themſelves under engagements to the Lord, and to each other, binding them to abide by the profeſſion of the faith they have made; and to aſſiſt each other in maintaining it.

IV. We are not anſwerable for what may be found defective, amiſs, or foreign to the nature of the kingdom of Chriſt, in the manner of covenanting uſed by ſome churches in former times, while we do not approve nor imitate their blemiſhes. It is ſurely no argument againſt a duty, that it has not been always obſerved with due attention to the ſcripture-rules. As little is the common prevailing hatred at this duty, any argument with us to reject it as unneceſſary. We have reaſon to conclude, that the great adverſary of the Church hates it, and is afraid of it, ſince he ſtirs up ſo many to rail againſt it. If ſome good men have appeared againſt it, this is neither new nor ſtrange. Good men have, at times, appeared in a bad cauſe; but we know, the firſt who, in later times, appeared againſt public covenanting, were generally a malignant, ungodly, profane generation, who hated it in proportion as they hated the pure reformed doctrine which the Church engaged by covenant to maintain and promote.

* Jerem. l. 5.

promote. The hatred of this duty has become more general, as the power of godlineſs and zeal for the truth have declined.

V. Covenanting is uſeful for uniting Church-members; for ſtrengthening them by their union; for teſtifying to the world their ſtedfaſt adherence to the truth; for impreſſing their minds with a ſenſe of their duty; and for giving glory to the Lord, by ſuch a ſolemn acknowledgment of their ſubjection to him. It is not unneceſſary, becauſe we were bound to perform the ſame duties before we engaged by ſolemn covenant to do them. In every profeſſion of the faith which Chriſtians make, either when they enter into the Church, or when they join together in celebrating the Lord's death, they do but acknowledge that to be their duty which was ſo before: they do not bind themſelves to any thing which they might otherwiſe have lawfully neglected. But we hope none will ſay, that ſuch profeſſions are, for this reaſon, uſeleſs.

VI. We teſtify againſt thoſe who oppoſe this duty, either by pleading, that it is unſeaſonable, in the preſent divided ſtate of the Church; or by aſſerting, that it ceaſes to be a duty in New Teſtament times. They do not take the proper way to heal the diviſions of the Church, who neglect an appointed mean for uniting and ſtrengthening its members; nor do they rightly underſtand the nature of the New-Teſtament Church, who deny, that it is proper for it to acknowledge its ſubjection to the Lord, in as public and ſolemn a manner, as the Old-Teſtament Church did.

ARTICLE VI. *Of Singing the Pſalms of David.*

I. WE declare, that the pſalms of David are proper to be ſung in public worſhipping aſſemblies, and in families; and that we believe they were deſigned for this purpoſe by the Holy Spirit. Every human compoſition muſt be as much inferior to them, as the writings of the beſt of men are inferior to the Word of God.

II. That imitation of the pſalms of David, which is, by many, ſubſtituted in their place, we reject for theſe reaſons: *Firſt*, We reckon it a very daring preſumption, for any man to give us an imitation of a part of the ſcripture;

ture; pretending, that it is more worthy of our acceptance, and more proper to be uſed in the worſhip of God, than the ſcripture itſelf. Let the writings of fallible men contain ever ſo many valuable truths, ſtill we are not aſhamed to declare, that *never man ſpake like God. Secondly*, In that imitation, ſome of theſe excellent pſalms, precious to the ſaints, as ſongs of praiſe, which the Lord their God put in their mouths, are quite left out. *Thirdly*, Theſe pſalms, of which an imitation is given to us, are, many of them, ſo diſordered and mangled, that one can ſee little reſemblance between the imitation and the ſcripture ſongs. By this, contempt is put upon the order of matter which the Holy Spirit judged the beſt. *Fourthly*, One declared reaſon of ſubſtituting that imitation in place of the pſalms of David, is, that many things in the latter are affirmed to be contrary to the ſpirit of meekneſs, forgiveneſs, and love to all men, which is ſaid to be peculiar to the New-Teſtament Church. This is an injurious reflection on what the Holy Spirit ſays in the Old-Teſtament.

III. That the commandment to forgive and love our enemies, was never heard of, nor practiſed by the people of God, till our Lord Jeſus came in the fleſh; and that the Old-Teſtament doctrine is contrary to it, is a wicked opinion long ago maintained by the Socinians; theſe enemies to the divine glory and free grace of the Redeemer, but juſtly condemned in the Proteſtant churches; and we do reject it with abhorrence. The Holy Ghoſt ſpake by the mouth of David; his *pſalms* are again and again mentioned in the New-Teſtament, as the ſayings of the Holy Spirit; and he ſpake nothing by David, or by any other of the Old-Teſtament Prophets, which he denied or contradicted under the New-Teſtament diſpenſation. The Spirit of the Lord exhorted men to exerciſe the ſame love and forgiveneſs towards enemies under the Old as under the New-Teſtament diſpenſation: *If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirſty, give him water to drink* *: *Rejoice not, when thine enemy falleth; neither let thine heart be glad when he ſtumbleth* †; were commandments made known of old, and were binding on men as well before as after the coming of Chriſt. Such commandments were neither unknown to

* Prov. xxv. 32. † Prov. xxiv. 17.

to David, nor unpractiſed by him. He delivered *the man who without cauſe was* his *enemy*: for the truth of this he appeals to God *. If he ſometimes failed in this duty, ſo alſo do Chriſtians under the New-Teſtament, being ſtill very far from perfection in holineſs.

IV. What are, by ſome, reckoned curſes and imprecations in the pſalms, are nothing more than a declaring of the righteous judgments which God will execute upon the wicked; and a ſaying, *Amen*, to all he does, as juſt and holy. This is no way contrary to the doctrine of the New-Teſtament. Paul did not forget the command to love his enemies, when he prayed, as to ſome of them, that *the Lord* might *reward* them *according to* their *works* †. He knew that command did not forbid him to pray that the Lord would vindicate his own cauſe, and defeat its malicious obſtinate adverſaries. The whole New-Teſtament Church is, in the Revelation, repreſented as joining in a ſong of praiſe, which they who object againſt the pſalms of David, might, with equal reaſon, repreſent as contrary to the ſpirit of forgiveneſs. *After theſe things*, ſays John, *I heard a great voice of much people in heaven*, (that is the viſible church), *ſaying, Alleluia, Salvation and glory and honour and power unto the Lord our God; for, true and righteous are his judgments*, (the terrible plagues mentioned in the former chapter); *for, he hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his ſervants at her hand* ‡.

V. We uſe, it is true, a poetical verſion of the pſalms; and it is ſcarcely, if at all poſſible to form a verſion of this kind, as ſtrictly agreeable to the original as a proſe one may be formed. But this defect cannot be remedied, by departing ſtill further from the original, in an imitation which bears but a very faint imperfect reſemblance to it. We have the original matter, and the original order of the matter in the verſion uſed by us: and we are not aſhamed to prefer this matter to the beſt ſayings of men; and this order to any, men ever did or ever will deviſe.

VI. If there are, in the pſalms, *ſome things hard to be underſtood*; ſo are there in the other parts of ſcripture. Prayer and ſtudy are means appointed to lead us into the mind

* Pſal vii. 4. † 2 Tim. iv. 14. ‡ Rev. xix. 1, 2.

mind of the Holy Spirit in ſuch paſſages. It belongs to the work of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to *open* our *underſtandings, that* we may *underſtand the ſcriptures* *, and we ought to truſt in him that he will do ſo. If we, in ſome inſtances, find ourſelves unable to perceive the ſenſe of the ſacred oracles, we ought humbly to confeſs our ignorance and incapacity to diſcern the things of the Spirit of God. We ought not to repreſent the language of the Holy Spirit as improper, or too obſcure for general uſe in the Church; nor to throw aſide our Bible as too difficult for us to underſtand, ſubſtituting an imitation of it in its place, which may be thought more plain. The more exactly any verſion expreſſes the ſenſe of the inſpired writers, and the more cloſely it follows their manner of ſpeaking, it is ſo much the more valuable.

ARTICLE VII. *Of Swearing.*

I. WE maintain, that, when duly called to ſwear an oath, we ſhould ſwear, as the ſcripture directs us, with our hand lifted up to the MOST HIGH GOD. We teſtify againſt the cuſtom of ſwearing by kiſſing the Goſpels, the Bible, or any other book, as improper and ſuperſtitious; of a Popiſh, if not of a Pagan original, and deſtitute of that ſolemnity which ſhould be uſed in appealing to God for the truth of what we aſſert.

II. We do, likewiſe, teſtify againſt all oaths, in which the ſwearer engages to keep ſecret what he does not know, —ſomething not being revealed to him, till he engage by oath to conceal it. Such oaths are enſnaring, as they may contain what a man cannot, without ſin, perform; and are ſuch as our conſcience cannot approve of as lawful and proper, ſince we do not know what we are engaging to do. They ought, therefore, to be carefully avoided by ſuch as would *walk blameleſs in all the commandments of the Lord.* We do not, however, deny, that perſons employed in the civil government of their country, or in its defence in caſe of war, may lawfully ſwear to conceal the public buſineſs; leſt the knowledge of it being conveyed to the enemy, ſhould hurt the intereſts of the community.

ARTICLE

* Luke xxiv. 44.

ARTICLE VIII. *Of Preſbyterial Church-government.*

I. WE adhere to Preſbyterial Church-government, as that which Chriſt hath appointed, and which no power, eccleſiaſtical or civil, may lawfully change. Our Lord Jeſus has expreſsly forbidden any of his ſervants to act as *lords over his heritage*, or to *exerciſe dominion* over their brethren *. Biſhops, claiming the ſole or chief power of ordination, and ruling over their fellow-ſervants, are therefore uſurpers and intruders in the Church of Chriſt: He never appointed them; and he will never bleſs that power and authority, which they take to themſelves, above what they may have a right to in common with other miniſters of the goſpel. The ſame perſons are in the New-Teſtament called *Biſhops*, or *Overſeers* and *Preſbyters*, or *Elders*: ſo that the diſtinction between theſe has not the leaſt ſhadow of authority from the word of God, and owes its riſe to thoſe times when the Church had degenerated from its firſt purity and order. All the miniſters of the goſpel are of the ſame order, and have equal authority in the houſe of God.

II. Our Lord Chriſt has alſo appointed, that there ſhould be *elders* to aſſiſt in the government of his Church, beſides thoſe who labour in word and doctrine †; alſo *deacons* to attend to the concerns of the poor ‡: and, as this laſt office is comprehended in each of the two former, there is nothing unreaſonable in the ſame perſon acting as a ruling elder, and as a deacon, if he can conveniently fulfil the duty of both offices.

III. All office-bearers in particular congregations, whether miniſters, elders or deacons, ought to be choſen by the people, and by ſuch of them only as are in the full communion of the Church. The privilege of chuſing their own office-bearers belongs to Chriſtian congregations, by a divine right; being authoriſed by the examples we have in the New-Teſtament, of this power being exerciſed by Church-members. Such office-bearers as thruſt themſelves into the Church, the people not conſenting to their admiſſion, are to be conſidered as *hirelings* and *intruders*; till they manifeſt their repentance, and obtain the approbation of thoſe among whom they exerciſe their office. It belongs to the judicatories of the Church to try thoſe who are

* 1 Pet. v. 3.; Matt. xx. 25. † 1 Tim. v. 17. ‡ Acts vi. 1, 7.

are choſen by the people; and, if they are found qualified, ſolemnly to ſet them apart, and ordain them to their office.

IV. Any number of miniſters and congregations, may ſo join together as to be one church, under one government, making one confeſſion of the faith of Chriſt, and following one order in the worſhip of God; and where a number of congregations can attain this, it is their duty ſo to unite, for ſtrengthening one another's hands, and encouraging one another's hearts in the work of the Lord. The Chriſtians of a particular place are often mentioned in the New-Teſtament as one church; though, in ſundry inſtances, where they are ſo mentioned, they were ſo numerous, that it is unreaſonable to believe they all aſſembled to worſhip God in one congregation. This aſſociation of particular churches or congregations into one body, may be extended as far as may be judged practicable and conducive to the proſperity of the kingdom of Chriſt.

V. The office bearers of the Church of Chriſt may and ought to meet together, not merely to conſult and give advice in matters of difficulty; but to judge and determine controverſies which may ariſe about the doctrine and order of the Church. The word of God is their rule: They ought to judge and determine every thing according to it; if they do not, their deciſions are not to be received. But their determinations, if agreeable to the ſcripture, and warranted by it, ought to be ſubmitted to by the Church. Though every man has a right to judge for himſelf concerning the determinations of Church-judicatories; yet, as the peace and unity of the Church are matters of great importance, we ought to judge deliberately, to examine matters by the word of God, to beware of prejudice; and not to oppoſe any deciſion of the courts of Chriſt, unleſs we are fully perſuaded in our own minds, that his truth and cauſe would ſuffer by our ſilence.

VI. In the preſent divided ſtate of Chriſtians, every one ought carefully to enquire what particular church is holding the truths and ordinances of Chriſt moſt pure and entire; and this conſideration, not worldly intereſt, conveniency, the influence of friends, or the circumſtance of his being educated among ſuch a denomination of Chriſtians, ſhould determine his choice. It is a mercy to be educated in a church where there is an upright and faithful

ful profeſſion of the name of Chriſt, and many examples of the power of godlineſs to be ſeen in the lives of Church-members: the Lord thus ordering our lot, where the light of the goſpel ſhines clearly, we have an opportunity to know his truth in our early years; and great will be our ſin, if we deſpiſe this privilege, and draw back to the ſociety of the corrupt. It is not, however, the circumſtance of our education among Chriſtians of a certain denomination, but the truth itſelf, as expreſſed in the word of God, which ought to determine us as to what particular church we ſhould enter into. If we continue in the church in which we had our education, it ſhould not be becauſe we were educated in it, but becauſe we find it a diſtinguiſhing privilege to have been ſo; it being a church agreeable to the pattern given us in the word of God.

VII. As we adhere to the form of Preſbyterian Church-government, and do receive and obſerve the order deſcribed and agreed upon by the Aſſembly of Divines at Weſtminſter 1645, entitled, "The *Form* of Preſbyterial *Church-government*, and *Ordination* of *Miniſters*;" ſo we reckon it a matter worthy of contending for, as belonging to the *faith once delivered to the ſaints;* and we teſtify againſt thoſe who break it down, as enemies in this part of their conduct, to the intereſts of religion. A ſcriptural Church-government is an hedge which God hath ſet about his vineyard; if it is taken away, the wild beaſts will enter and make a prey of the vine. We do particularly teſtify againſt the following opinions, as contrary to the word of God, and injurious to the kingdom of Chriſt: *Firſt*, That our Lord Jeſus appointed no form of government in his Church; but left it to men,—to miniſters of the goſpel, according to ſome,—to civil magiſtrates, according to others, to appoint in it whatever kind of government they ſhould think moſt proper. *Secondly*, That there ought to be in the Church an order of biſhops, diſtinct from teaching elders or preſbyters, and ſuperior to them; and that to theſe biſhops, the ſole or chief power of ordination and the government of the Church do belong, either by authority from Chriſt, as ſome affirm, or by authority from the civil magiſtrate; who, as others affirm, has a right to create ſuch ſpiritual lords. *Thirdly*, That there is no warrant or neceſſity for ruling elders diſtinct from miniſters of the goſpel. *Fourthly*, That a particular church ought to conſiſt

ſiſt of no more than one worſhipping aſſembly or congregation; it being, according to the advocates for this opinion, improper for different congregations to unite themſelves into one church, ſubordinate to one preſbyterial government. *Fifthly*, That the power of ordaining office-bearers, of cenſuring ſcandalous perſons, with the entire government of the Church, belong to the whole community of Church-members.

ARTICLE IX. *Of the Order of Worſhip.*

I. THE order which we obſerve in the worſhip of God, is that preſcribed in the Directory agreed upon by the Aſſembly of Divines at Weſtminſter in 1645; except in ſome few particulars, for which we have no other rule than this, *Let all things be done to edifying.*

II. We teſtify againſt the following cuſtoms, as contrary to the ſcripture, and to the order of the moſt purely reformed churches: *Firſt*, That of baptizing privately, or where no public aſſembly is called to attend on the diſpenſation of word and ſacrament. What may be done in extraordinary caſes, and in times of perſecution, is no rule. It is plain, that, as by baptiſm one is ſolemnly received into the viſible Church, ſo it ought to be performed publicly. The cuſtom of diſpenſing it privately muſt either ariſe from careleſſneſs, or from a ſuperſtitious opinion of the abſolute neceſſity of baptiſm in order to ſalvation. As the infants of believing parents are members of the viſible Church, and as the promiſe is to them; ſo ſuch parents ſhould eſteem it their privilege, that they may bring their children to the Lord Jeſus, and publicly devote them to him in baptiſm. *Secondly*, The reading, inſtead of the preaching of ſermons in public, is another cuſtom againſt which we teſtify. It is directly oppoſite to the ſcripture pattern. Never do we hear, either in the Old or New Teſtament, of public teachers taking a written paper, and reading it to the people for their inſtruction. It is a *burying of talents in the earth*, if the teacher has them; and if he has them not, he is unfit for this office. It is not calculated to promote general edification; and never was practiſed in any Church, till the power and life of religion was, in a great meaſure, decayed.

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CONCLUSION.

I. NO teſtimony which we maintain in our profeſſion, will be accepted of God, or uſeful in his Church, if we contradict it in our practice. *Faith* is known *by works*, as *the tree is by its fruit.* Such as make a good profeſſion, but contradict it in their practice, are to be numbered among the worſt enemies of Chriſt. Through their wickedneſs, the *good ways of the Lord are evil ſpoken of*; the avowed enemies of his cauſe are hardened in their oppoſition to it; the weak of his people are made to wander and ſtumble; and the hearts of the upright are grieved.

II. *The grace of God that bringeth ſalvation*, will effectually teach them who truly receive it, to *deny all ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts*, and to *live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world*; *looking for that bleſſed hope* of the redeemed, *and the appearing of the glory of the great God, even our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* As Chriſtians ought to abſtain from every appearance of evil, ſo they ſhould ever follow that which is good. It is not enough that they cannot be accuſed of doing what the Lord forbids; they ſhould be ſtudious to do what he requires.

III. Our Larger Catechiſm, in deſcribing the duties required, and the ſins forbidden, under each of the ten commandments, is an excellent comment on that ſummary of the divine law; and ought to be carefully ſtudied by Chriſtians, that they may learn what is, and what is not approved in the ſight of God. Thoſe who profeſs an adherence to that Catechiſm, as a part of the confeſſion of their faith to the world; if they are found ſtill cleaving to theſe evils, which, by their profeſſion, they have ſolemnly renounced, and neglecting thoſe very things which, by their profeſſion, they acknowledge to be duty; ſtand in a ſpecial manner ſelf-condemned.

IV. The example of Chriſtians, who, abounding in faith, are *careful to maintain good works*, do not think highly of themſelves, endure tribulations of every kind, *as ſeeing him who is inviſible*, and are animated by an heavenly zeal for the glory of God; is exceeding uſeful in the Church, being a mean which the Lord frequently uſes to convince others, and to draw their attention to his word. The exhortation of Chriſt ſhould, therefore, abide daily on

the minds of thoſe who call on his name; *Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven* *. It is thus, that Chriſtians *put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men*, and make thoſe *aſhamed who falſely accuſe* their *good converſation in Chriſt* †. It is thus they approve themſelves *blameleſs and harmleſs, the ſons of God without rebuke, in the mids of a crooked and a perverſe nation, among whom* they *ſhine as lights in the world* ‡. *This is the will of God*, the *ſanctification* of his people, that they may *glorify* him in their *bodies and ſpirits which are his*.

V. As it ſhould be the ſtudy of Chriſtians to *do good to all men*, ſo, in a ſpecial manner, *to the houſehold of faith. Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering, and let us conſider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works* ‖. We ſhould conſider the diſtreſſes of others, that, according to the ability the Lord hath given us, we may relieve them. *Whoſo hath this world's good, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him* §? We ſhould conſider what is worthy of commendation in others, that we may imitate and encourage them in it. We ſhould conſider what is blamable in others, that we may avoid it; that we may, in a friendly manner, warn them of it; and that we may do what in us lies to prevent the evil effects of it.

VI. Chriſt's *yoke is eaſy* and his *burden light*. Thoſe who profeſs to have taken it upon them, act quite out of character, while they expreſs a continual uneaſineſs at the reſtraint which their profeſſion lays them under, from joining with the world in its fooliſh and pernicious ways; and while they are, upon every other occaſion, going as nigh what is forbidden as they poſſibly can, without rendering themſelves directly chargeable with it, or thus liable to Church-cenſure. Such are guilty of miſrepreſenting to the world thoſe *ways* of *wiſdom* which *are pleaſantneſs*, and thoſe paths of hers, all of which *are peace*.

VII. We do earneſtly beſeech all into whoſe hands this our Teſtimony may come, to examine the matters contained in it by the word of God; to weigh them in the balance of the ſanctuary, and judge, whether the Lord is

* Matth. v. 16. † 1 Pet. iii. 16. ‡ Phil. ii. 15.
‖ Heb. x. 23, 24. § 1 John iii. 17.

is not calling them to confeſs, hold faſt, and teſtify for the truths expreſſed in it; againſt thoſe enemies, who are labouring to deprive the preſent and following generations of the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt. Let not the fewneſs of our number, our obſcurity in the world, or the failings of thoſe who adhere to our Teſtimony, prejudice any at the duty to which the Lord is calling them. We do, particularly, intreat thoſe of our brethren in Chriſt, who are zealous to withſtand the general oppoſition made, in this age, to the doctrine of ſalvation by ſovereign free grace through Jeſus Chriſt, and who adhere to the Preſbyterial form of Church-government, to judge, whether it is not their duty to join us in teſtifying againſt that LATITUDINARIAN ſcheme, which has wrought, and is ſtill working ſo much miſchief; by repreſenting one truth after another as not worth contending for, till the whole is ſubverted, and particular churches ruined.

Ariſe, O Lord, and let thine enemies be ſcattered: let them that hate thee flee before thee *. *Plead the cauſe that is thine own. Remember how the fooliſh man reproacheth thee daily. Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of thoſe that riſe up againſt thee increaſeth continually* †. *Do good, in thy good pleaſure, unto* ZION: *build thou the walls of thy* JERUSALEM; *ſo ſhall ſacrifices of thankſgiving be rendered to thee in thy Church* ‡. AMEN.

* Pſal. lxviii. 1. † Pſal. lxxiv. 22, 23. ‡ Pſal. li. 18, 19.

FINIS.